

FEATURES

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Win a weekend for two in New York

THE INDEPENDENT

Friday 6 February 1998 45p No 3,527

Brown swoops to save doomed estates

THE 20 WORST estates in the most deprived parts of the country are to be targeted by the Government in an extension of the "New Deal" drive against poverty.

The initiative was revealed by Gordon Brown, Chancellor of the Exchequer, in an exclusive interview with *The Independent*. But there was confusion about the move in Whitehall and Westminster last night, with some senior ministers clearly taken by surprise by the Treasury-led "initiative".

There was a strong feeling that some of the Prime Minister's colleagues were again flexing their

muscles, taking advantage of his absence in Washington. Last night, in a keynote political speech agreed with Tony Blair in advance of his departure on Wednesday evening, David Blunkett, Secretary of State for Education and Employment, said the challenge of welfare reform was "to turn Britain into a nation of victors over adversity, rather than victims trapped on benefit".

Speaking in Cardiff, he said that the Government was advocating a return of the "get-up-and-go" enthusiasm drained from the community by 18 years of Conservative government, which created a system

that rewarded people maximising the extent of their illness, their disability, their poverty, and their dependence on others."

Mr Brown and John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, are to launch the initiative which will bring together spending from several government programmes. But it was unclear whether the "launch" would be delivered by Mr Prescott in a speech to Labour's local government conference, in Scarborough, tonight.

The drive will involve the Social Exclusion Unit, and focus resources on estates with some of the worst social problems. In the 20 worst estates

as many as seven out of ten working households have nobody in work, the proportion of lone-parent families is three times the national average and there is six times the average rate of truancy from school.

Very few of these high-priority estates have amenities such as nurseries, good public transport, or local businesses, according to Whitehall studies. The new initiative is expected to be focused on inner-city areas. Among the estates likely to be on the high priority list are Stone-

bridge Park, north-west London; Blackbird Leys, Oxford; North Prospect in Plymouth; Toxteth, Merseyside; Ordsall, Salford; and estates in Newcastle and Manchester.

A recent Whitehall analysis has revealed that although more public money is spent in the most deprived areas, most of it is passive spending such as benefit payments. Under the initiative the Government's existing New Deal programmes will be extended to tilt the balance of spending towards creating work opportunities and improving education and training in the specifically targeted estates.

The programme could start with pilot schemes, and the Government is looking at how to involve the private sector. It plans to build on existing successful local community projects, drawing up a register of the ones that could be used as templates for other parts of the country.

Funding for the plan, which will cost £1 billion, will be co-ordinated by a range of government departments and local authorities, will probably be announced in the Budget next month. The money is likely to come from the existing welfare-to-work funds in the first instance, with much more allocated after the announcement of

the public expenditure for summer.

Mr Brown said: "We have spent money... compensating people for... but we have not tackled it of poverty."

The Chancellor said the key to our new initiative would be its comprehensive approach. There would be co-operation with the recently established health, employment and education action zones. But he emphasised that job creation was the most important aspect. "Regeneration in these areas has got to be economic and employment-led," he said.

No distance between them: the Clintons and the Blairs join forces against Saddam



With their husbands preparing to talk of war, Cherie Blair and Hillary Clinton stand together at a welcoming ceremony for the British couple at the White House yesterday. Tony Blair gave his friend Bill Clinton his full support in the Iraq crisis

'I've had enough' says doyen of BBC drama

By Rob Brown
Media Editor



MICHAEL WEARING, the man responsible for some of the BBC's biggest critical successes in recent times, including *Pride and Prejudice*, *Boys from the Blackstuff*, and *Our Friends in the North*, is quitting the corporation in disgust at the way its television drama department is being run.

In an interview with *The Stage*, published yesterday, Mr Wearing said: "I have no choice. It is creatively impossible for me to remain."

He said the "straw that broke the camel's back" was a refusal by the new controller of BBC1, Peter Salmon, to back a screen adaptation of a novel by the crime writer Janet Neel.

That decision, he suspected, had been based upon the feedback from US-style focus groups, which he believes are having a bigger and bigger say in what the BBC commissions.

Veteran producer Kenneth Trott, who quit the BBC a year ago after branding its drama de-

The Singing Detective – described Mr Wearing as "the only man of integrity" still holding a high post in the BBC's stricken television drama department. "For the executives he is a kind of fig leaf covering what is going on," he said.

Mr Wearing, who has been outspoken throughout his career, and almost quit two years ago, was not available for comment yesterday.

The BBC issued a brief statement which read: "Michael Wearing is due to retire next year and is obviously discussing his future plans outside the BBC, so he may decide to go sooner rather than later."

Mr Wearing did indicate in the interview that he has other work – what he called his "parachute" – lined up. Having received a special Bafta award last year for his outstanding contribution to British television, he should not be short of alternative offers.

Drama crisis, page 3

Today's news

Schoolboys cleared

THREE primary school boys were acquitted yesterday at the Old Bailey of indecently assaulting a nine-year-old girl at their school. The case raised questions about the suitability of holding the trial of such young children at the Old Bailey, Britain's most famous court.

Page 3

Irvine backs down

THE Lord Chancellor was forced to retreat last night after his demand for new restraints on the press was dismissed as "censorship" by Lord Wakeham, chairman of the Press Complaints Commission.

Page 4

Health blueprint

TARGETS for creating a healthier nation were set out by the Government yesterday as part of its strategy for reducing the health gap between the rich and the poor.

Page 6

Murdoch under fire

LABOUR'S revolt against the press power of Rupert Murdoch was joined yesterday by Lord Hattersley, the party's former deputy leader, as peers geared up for Monday's vote on a tougher media competition law.

Page 8



Help stop this now

Day after day, this bear is dragged into a bloody arena to face pairs of bull terriers. His teeth have been ripped out and his claws blunted, so he is at the dogs' mercy. The bear doesn't know the trainer won't let him be killed, but the bear doesn't know this. Over and over again, he is fighting for his life.

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WSPA
World Society for the Protection of Animals

Britain and US speak with one voice

From Mary Dejevsky
in Washington



Photograph: AP

UPPING the pressure on Iraq still further, President Bill Clinton and Tony Blair, the Prime Minister, used a joint appearance at the White House to impress upon Baghdad that it must comply with UN resolutions on weapons inspections or risk the use of force.

Responding to Mr Clinton's welcome on his first official visit to Washington, Mr Blair said he wanted a diplomatic solution to the crisis, "but the success or failure of diplomacy rests on Saddam. If he fails to respond, then he knows that the threat of force is there and it is real".

Mr Clinton said the United States and Britain "will stand against those who defy the will of the international community by maintaining stability in the

Persian Gulf". But he indicated that he was still agonising over a decision to use force and tried to dispel growing speculation that the US might be preparing to try to topple the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein.

Citing US policy, which specifically states that political assassinations are not in US foreign policy interests, Mr Clinton said: "Our interest is in preventing Saddam Hussein from building biological, chemical, nuclear weapons capability [and] the weapons to deliver such weapons – that's where the authority from the United Nations resolutions rests."

Earlier, Mr Blair had used a

barrage of appearances on US television breakfast shows to underline Britain's support for the United States over Iraq. There must, he said, "be a real threat of force and the use of force if necessary". Asked about yesterday's report in *The Independent* that air strikes were due to commence in 12 days' time unless Iraq backed down, Mr Blair said it was "highly specu-

lative", but he did not deny it.

The Pentagon, meanwhile, announced that a 2,200-strong detachment of marines were being dispatched to the Gulf.

It was also reported that a third US aircraft carrier, the *Independence*, had arrived in the region. It joins two larger US aircraft carriers and a British carrier already deployed there.

But the logistics of an operation may still not be secure.

The US has just failed to extract undertakings from Saudi Arabia to allow the US to use its facilities in any assault on Iraq.

Obtaining a consensus in the UN for the renewed use of force is also proving difficult, with China, Russia, Egypt and most of the Arab states opposed.

Cool's search, page 12

Equal in the Army, so long as you're not gay

By Kathy Marks

WHAT, exactly, is an equal opportunities employer? As far as the Army is concerned, it is an employer that offers equal opportunities – to everyone but gays.

The question arose yesterday when the Advertising Standards Authority said it was investigating whether the Army can truthfully claim to be such an employer, given that homosexuals are banned from serving in its ranks.

The ASA has received complaints about a recruitment poster in which the Army in effect brags about its enlightened policies. The poster features four soldiers of different ethnic origins, and carries the slogan: "The Army Can't Be An Equal Opportunities Employer

from ethnic minorities. At the time, General Sir Roger Wheeler, chief of the general staff, said that the Army wished to counter lingering perceptions that it was a racist organisation. It appears to be less sensitive, however, to charges of sexual prejudice. Yesterday, a spokesman said: "We are not equal opportunity employers as far as homosexuals are concerned, and that is a legal position."

The ASA has contacted the Army and asked it to justify the statement, which it believes may contravene two clauses of its code: the need to provide objective substantiation of any claim, if challenged, and the rule that advertisements should not mislead "through inaccuracy, ambiguity, exaggeration, omission or otherwise".

Previous posters have stated that the

Army is an equal opportunities employer, but only as a line at the bottom. It is the prominence of it in this latest advertisement that prompted the ASA to take action. "In the past, we have taken the view that most people would be aware that it was the Army's definition of equal opportunities that applied," said a spokesman.

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Boys cleared of rape and assault of girl, 9, at school

Four boys have been cleared of raping and indecently assaulting a nine-year-old girl at their primary school. The case, says Jason Benett, Crime Correspondent, poses questions about how courts and the police should deal with children accused of such serious offences.

It was a terrible, harrowing story – a nine-year-old girl allegedly raped and sexually assaulted in the school lavatory by a gang of pupils aged from 9 to 11. But as the Old Bailey jury yesterday acquitted the last of the defendants, following a three-week trial, a national children's charity called for a change in the law to prevent such a trial ever being repeated.

New legislation has lowered the age at which children can be charged with rape to 10 and this case is believed to involve Britain's youngest ever defendants for that offence. Despite attempts to make Court 12 at the Old Bailey – the country's highest criminal court – more child-friendly with the use of crayons, video links and colouring books, it was condemned last night as "inappropriate".

Questions have also been asked as to whether the police and Crown prosecutors should

ever have brought the case in the first place when the conviction relied so heavily on the girl's testimony. The two boys, one aged 10 and one 11, were cleared yesterday of the sex attack on the girl, now aged 10, in the boys' lavatory at their school in west London in May last year.

On Tuesday two 10-year-olds were also acquitted of the rape charges on the direction of the judge. A third 10-year-old was cleared on the same day of

indecent assault. The judge said a police interviewer had asked leading and wholly improper questions of the defendant.

The girl had been raped and beaten by a group of men in her native Jamaica at the age of six before moving to Britain. She alleged that a group of five boys dragged her into lavatories at their school, forcibly stripped her, then took it in turns to rape her as the others looked on.

The headmistress of the pri-

mary school where the alleged attack took place had told the jury that one boy said the girl "wanted to do it". The girl was deeply affected by her experiences in Jamaica and had started a number of fires and told her mother that voices had made her do it. Before asking the jurors to retire, the judge had warned them: "In the light of her undoubtedly discrepancies in her account, her history of fantasies, her reputation at

school for telling untruths and blaming others, and her vulnerable, nice personality, I strongly advise you to exercise caution before acting on her evidence alone."

After the case the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, said: "The NSPCC believes that a formal adult court setting is an inappropriate place to deal with children, whether they are victims, defendants or witnesses.

Drama chief quits BBC as changes bring a life of misery

BBC spin doctors have gone into a tailspin over the comments of the Corporation's head of drama serials who is poised to quit over what he calls 'rampant commercialisation'. Rob Brown, Media Editor, reports.

If only the BBC could make a drama about its own drama department, whose perpetual internal tensions yet again exploded into public view yesterday.

The man credited with some of the corporation's finest creative successes is poised to quit. Michael Wearing, head of drama serials, who brought *Boys from the Blackstuff*, *Our Friends in the North* and *Pride and Prejudice* to our screens, along with *Common as Muck* and *House of Cards*, claims that it is "creatively impossible" to remain in post because "rampant commercialisation" has made his life "a misery".

His scathing comments instantly sent the drama department's spin doctors at Television Centre into a spin. They did everything in their power to limit the damage, claiming that Mr Wearing was annoyed because the new controller of BBC1, Peter Salmon, had refused to commission a project on which he was keen – an adaptation of a crime novel by Janet Neel.

Whilst acknowledging that he is the doyen of television drama, they pointed out that he is 59 and has lined up other work outside the corporation. They issued a terse statement: "Michael is due to retire next year and is obviously discussing his future plans outside the BBC, so he may have to go sooner rather than later."

BBC bosses are obviously starting to find Mr Wearing's outspokenness more than a hit wearing. "I think the most significant point to note is that his comments were made at a party," was the response from a spokesman who obviously doesn't



Last of the summer wine: The BBC's failure to commission a new series of *This Life*, above, caused a major row last year. Michael Wearing's credits include *Pride and Prejudice*, below, *House of Cards*, left, and *Common as Muck*.



3

need any lessons from Peter Mandelson in the black art of character assassination.

The *Stage*, the actors' trade paper, reported Mr Wearing's comments which were made at a recent party to celebrate the British presence at the forthcoming Banff International Television Festival in Canada. But several other (apparently very sober) leading television dramatists

were swift to echo his damning criticisms yesterday. Trevor Griffiths told *The Independent*: "Michael Wearing is in the great tradition of BBC drama producers. The thought that he's been driven out of the corporation by its new commercial ethos is appalling."

Mr Griffiths, it should be said, crossed swords with BBC apparatchiks himself re-

cently when his drama commemorating the anniversary of Nye Bevan's birth was downgraded to a graveyard slot on BBC2. The legendary Labour politician was portrayed by Brian Cox, who was so incensed by the treatment of the film that penned a powerful polemic for *The Independent on Sunday* denouncing the "dumbing down" of BBC drama.

Michael Wearing was given a special Bafta award last year in recognition of his outstanding creative contribution to television. Even the BBC spin doctors acknowledged yesterday that "he shows he makes cause waves and create talking points". They must be praying that one project he doesn't have in mind is a drama about the BBC drama department.

Labour's philistines come under attack

The philistinism of new Labour comes under savage attack from a Labour MP today, with Tony Blair depicted as the man who will be "tough on the arts, tough on the causes of arts". Anthony Bevins, Political Editor, reports a cry of dissent from the ranks.

Brian Sedgemore, MP for Hackney South and Shoreditch, will tell a Tate Gallery conference today that just as the Prime Minister believed in politics without conflict, he appeared to want art without subversion.

In a prepared text, he says: "New Labour wants art that is as pungent as processed cheese, as soul-searching as a conversation between Po, Laa-Laa, Dipsy and the other Teletubby, as original as Dolly the Sheep. As part of the politics of contentment, new Labour wants colours that do not clash, textures that do not distort, and shapes which Cubists would not understand."

"Turner in, conceptual art out, should hereinafter be the slogan that hangs outside the Tate. And please keep that painting which depicts Stanley Spencer's aching balls away from Tony's children. Surely there are less traumatic ways to express impotent love."

Mr Sedgemore, who claims more artists per square metre live in Hackney than anywhere else in the world, says: "The threat to fine arts institutions is that deep down new Labour, notwithstanding its sensitive, cultured secretary of state, Chris Smith, is every bit as philistine as Old Toryism."

"It doesn't want sensations or palm prints of Myra Hindley or visual satire which mocks the most powerful image in Western Christendom. I somehow can't see Harriet Harman sending out Christmas cards which have the mother of Jesus in the background tilling the fields around Bethlehem, with the son of God being looked after by a child-minder in the foreground."

But Mr Sedgemore becomes even more savage when dealing with the *Stepford Wives* – "that's those female new Labour MPs who've had the chip inserted into their brain to keep them on message, and who collectively put down women and children in the vote on lone parents' benefits. Few of them have shown any interest in culture."

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Jailed woman is cleared of killing her aunt for legacy

A music teacher was freed at the Old Bailey yesterday after finally being cleared of murdering her aunt for her legacy. Sheila Bowler - whose daughter Jane wept in her arms outside court after the jury's unanimous verdict - had endured two full murder trials and more than four years in jail after she was accused of driving her 89-year-old aunt to the River Brue near Rye in East Sussex and pushing her in.

Mrs Bowler, 68, who had always protested her innocence, was convicted at Hove Crown Court in 1993 of murdering Florence Jackson. But the Court of Appeal quashed

the conviction and ordered a re-trial last year after new medical evidence emerged.

Mrs Bowler, from Rye, denied murdering Mrs Jackson in May 1992 while driving her from a residential home to her own house. The prosecution alleged that she had dragged Mrs Jackson from her car to the river. Her body was found the following day.

Anthony Glass QC, for the prosecution, alleged that Mrs Bowler killed Mrs Jackson on the journey then covered up her deed by pretending her aunt - who normally needed help to walk - must have made her way to the river and accidentally fallen in.

Mrs Bowler said she had left Mrs Jackson - known as Aunt Flo - in her car when she went to get help for a flat tyre. When she returned she had disappeared.

Jeremy Roberts QC, for the defence, said the prosecution "had not produced one shred of direct evidence to connect Mrs Bowler with whatever it was that happened to Mrs Jackson that night". He told the jury: "No witness claims to have seen Mrs Bowler or her car at the pumping station or in Station Road that night. There is no scientific evidence suggesting Mrs Bowler had ever been in that area."

Professor Archibald Young, an expert in geriatric behaviour, who was called as a defence witness, had told the jury that people of Mrs Jackson's age and condition could have walked the quarter-of-a-mile from the car to the river by themselves.

The court had heard that Mrs Jackson was the aunt of Mrs Bowler's late husband, and that her only asset was a flat in Rye which she was leaving to her niece. Mrs Bowler had power of attorney and was responsible for arranging payment of fees at Greyfriars, a residential nursing home at Winchelsea where Mrs Jackson lived. She

owed more than £3,000 in arrears and the flat would have to be sold.

Mr Glass alleged that she had a financial interest in Mrs Jackson's death, saying that every month Mrs Jackson lived, the value of Mrs Bowler's inheritance diminished. But Mrs Bowler said that she received £17,500 a year from teaching at private schools and pensions. The mortgage on her home was paid off and she had savings.

After the verdict Mrs Bowler said she felt vindicated. "I do not feel bitter, but I am very angry that I had been convicted [earlier] of this. I lost my faith in the justice system," she said, adding that her ordeal had been "a living nightmare".

The campaign to free her was led by Tim and Angel Devlin, whose daughters were contemporaries of Jane Bowler at school. Tim Devlin's father, Lord Devlin, played a part in the release of the Guildford Four.

Channel Four said yesterday that a special edition of *Trial and Error*, which investigated the Bowler case, will be broadcast on Monday, showing Mrs Bowler, her family and lawyers, as they prepared for - and during - the 17-day retrial.

Prison diary, page 15

Campaign to free the Pooh Five: a scandal that would rock Seven Acre Wood

He always considered himself a very ordinary sort of bear, but, as Ross Prince reports, the whereabouts of Pooh sparked an international dispute when an MP who found him languishing in New York Public Library called for his return.

Americans have responded angrily to demands by Labour backbencher Gwyneth Dunwoody that the original Winnie the Pooh and his friends Piglet, Eeyore, Tiger and Kanga be repatriated to their homeland.

After finding the dolls sitting forlornly in the New York Public Library, Mrs Dunwoody tabled a Commons question to Chris Smith, the Culture Secretary, asking him to get the dolls back.

She said: "Just like the Greeks want their Elgin Marbles back, so we want our Winnie the Pooh back, along with all his splendid friends."

But the Mayor of New York City, Rudolph Giuliani, has vowed to keep the dolls in America. He broke off from his busy schedule yesterday to visit the exiled dolls at the West 53rd Street library. Accusing the Labour MPs of using "fightin' words", he said: "We will do anything we can to keep them here." Spokeswoman Colleen Roche added: "He just wanted to reassure the bear that he is safe on American soil."

There is speculation that Pooh's plight may even be raised at today's meetings between the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, and President Bill Clinton. A spokesperson for the White House said: "We do not expect this to be on the formal agenda of the meeting between President Clinton and Prime Minister Blair although we would not exclude that it could come up in discussions."

The bear that would become Winnie the Pooh was bought from Harrods by author A.A. Milne in the early 1920s for his son, Christopher Robin. The other dolls joined Pooh over the years, although Kanga's baby, Roo, was lost by Christopher Robin in a Surrey apple orchard and the whereabouts of Wol the owl is unclear.

The dolls became models for artist Ernest H. Shepard, whose beautiful line

drawings accompany the *Winnie the Pooh* books.

In 1947, Milne's American publisher spied the dolls in the corner of the author's living room and asked if he could take them

on a promotional tour of the US. The Pooh Five never saw England again.

The dolls were donated to the New York Public Library in 1987 and have been kept in a bullet-proof display case ever

since. They are seen by 750,000 visitors each year.

Ms Dunwoody said she was unfazed by the tough talk of the famously hard-line Mayor Giuliani. "I am happy to do battle with the Mayor of New York, any day he likes... he says I use fighting words - well I do. We want Winnie the Pooh back - and all his friends. This is where they belong, not in some stuffy glass case in New York."



The original Winnie the Pooh toys, which were donated to the New York Public Library in 1987. Gwyneth Dunwoody MP is working to arrange their return to Britain. Left, US media reaction to the demand. Photograph: Reuters

ADVANCE PREVIEWS NATIONWIDE THIS SUNDAY

Kevin Kline



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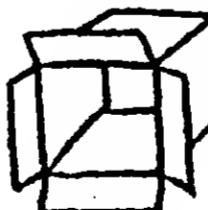
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Centrepoint
Housing young people at risk

Four goals for healthier Britain could save 15,000 lives

Four targets for creating a healthier Britain were set out yesterday by the Government. But there are none to reduce the health gap between rich and poor, says Jeremy Lauance, Health Editor.

A total of 15,000 lives will be saved in 2010 if the national targets for reductions in deaths from heart disease, cancer and suicide set out by the Government yesterday are achieved.

The goals, published in a Green Paper, *Our Healthier Nation*, represent a 17 per cent cut in the 90,000 deaths a year that now occur among the under-65s, the target group. But this is more modest than expected, reflecting the difficulty ministers see in changing individual habits, social pressures and environmental influences. A fourth target is to



total visit from 10 million to eight million a year.

The Green Paper sets out the Government's plans for replacing the Tories' Health of the

Nation strategy, launched in 1992. That set 27 targets for improving health and although a majority have been or are about to be achieved, some will be

badly missed including those on obesity, teenage pregnancy and teenage smoking.

Ministers say that by reducing the targets to four, efforts can

be concentrated where they matter most. "If everything is to be a priority then nothing will be a priority," the document says.

"There is no goal set for

teenage pregnancies, a subject that Tess Jowell, the public health minister, has signalled as among the most important indicators of social disadvantage.

Excess: Previous guidelines on obesity may be badly missed in the new Green Paper on creating a healthier nation

Photograph: Philip Meech

HEALTH TARGETS

- Heart disease/stroke – reduce the death-rate among people under 65 by a third by 2010, saving 8,500 lives a year.
- Accidents – reduce accidents in the home, on the roads and at work by a fifth by 2010, averting 2 million accidents a year.
- Cancer – reduce the death-rate from all cancers among people under 65 by a fifth by 2010, saving 6,000 lives a year.
- Mental health – reduce the death-rate from suicide and undetermined injury by a sixth by 2010, saving 800 lives a year.

Four sentences in the 90-page document explain that because pregnancy rates vary so widely around the country, targets should be set locally "where appropriate". Teenage pregnancy is to have a separate strategy.

No national aim is set for reducing health inequalities and discussion of the problem is confined to three paragraphs.

The Tories' Health of the Nation

strategy, which was attacked for failing to make the link between poverty and ill-health, is criticised here for its "limited vision" and its "reluctance to acknowledge the social, economic and environmental causes of ill health".

There is also no target set for reducing smoking, which is to be the subject of a separate White Paper in the spring.

The Green Paper acknowledges the influence of poverty, education, employment, transport and social services on health but insists that the Government cannot do everything. It rejects "individual victim blaming" and "nanny state social engineering" and says there is a third way – a national contract of better health. This involves a partnership between government, local communities and individuals with twin goals: to improve the health of the population as a whole and to improve the health of the worst off to narrow the health gap.

The task of tackling the health gap will fall to local health authorities which will be required to establish health improvement programmes focused on neighbourhoods or groups which suffer the worst health. However, ministers are waiting for the independent in-

quiry into health inequalities, chaired by Sir Donald Acheson, which is due to report in the spring, before deciding whether to include national targets.

The absence of targets for reducing health inequalities drew the strongest criticism from health organisations last night. Karen Caines, director of the Institute of Health Services Management said: "[Ministers] have peered over the precipice and drawn back a step or two. On this most crucial issue they have bottled out. Without measurable targets, even over a long timescale there will be less pressure for change."

Rabbi Julia Neuberger, chief executive of the Kings Fund, the health policy think tank, said: "We do have to measure progress in reducing inequalities, otherwise there is a danger that no one will take responsibility and be held to account".

Ministers say that the four national target areas of heart disease, cancer, mental health and accidents are all conditions which affect the poor more than the rich and measures to achieve them should therefore benefit the former proportionately more.

Responses to the Green Pa-

per are invited up to 30 April.

A shot in the arm for campaign trail

It is more than 20 years since the Government recognised that health could not be guaranteed by a health service. Diet and smoking, as well as Government policy in areas such as employment, housing and education had a greater impact than anything the NHS could achieve.

Over the past two decades repeated attempts have been made to improve public health and the difficulty of doing so is reflected in the uncanny resemblance between yesterday's Green Paper and those of the past.

In 1976, the then Department of Health and Social Security published *Prevention and Health: Everybody's Business* which highlighted what individuals could do to protect themselves from what were then known as "diseases of affluence" – heart disease and cancer.

It was followed by health campaigns in the Eighties, such as *Look after your Heart* launched by the Health Education Council, which today would be regarded as canny. The Health of the Nation strat-

egy launched by the Tory government in 1992 marked the most sophisticated development of this approach.

Its key weakness was its failure to acknowledge the link between ill health and poverty. But although yesterday's Green Pa-

per makes that link it is notably cautious about how far the

health gap between the rich and the poor can be narrowed.

Cautious is advisable. The lesson of the past 20 years is that improvements in public health, while desirable, are extraordinarily hard to achieve. Some campaigns such as drug-taking and AIDS, in the Eighties, have made matters worse.

Julian Le Grand, professor of health policy at the London School of Economics, said: "Given that public health is such a difficult and diffuse area and given our ignorance about what works and what doesn't I think the most we can hope for is small incremental steps. The only things we know work are locally targeted programmes."

— Jeremy Lauance

DAILY POEM

From *Late*

By Michael Hamburger

*A whole month of half-light,
January, before
A day, the last, breaks bright,
And the night sky, too, is lit
By a half-moon unobscured.
Clear evening star.*

*Cock-crow again
Millennials sounds,
Blends with the softer calls
Of wood-pigeon, collared dove,
The long indigenous
And the recently settled.*

*Suddenly
The acornites clenched
Under snow, in the half-light,
Though the chill persists,
Tiny suns, respond
To the sun above,
Open their petals, shine.*

Today's poem comes from the latest sequence by the poet and translator Michael Hamburger, born in Berlin in 1924, who came to Britain in 1933 and now lives in Suffolk. His many awards include the OBE and the Goethe Medal. *Late* is published by Anvil Press (£7.95).

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The £50,000 bill to keep paedophile safe in a cell

The cost to the public of keeping the paedophile killer Robert Oliver in a police cell in Sussex has exceeded £50,000.

Ian Burrell reports on the dilemma of coping with such offenders.

Sex-offender treatment centres are refusing to take responsibility for Oliver, the killer of Jason Swift, who has been living in a police cell for four months.

The public cost of looking after Oliver, who was hounded from town to town and sought refuge with the police in fear of revenge attacks by the public, has topped £50,000.

Officers from Sussex police, which is paying £400 a day from its budget for Oliver's keep, have been negotiating with various institutions to take the paedophile into their care. But none has been prepared to take the risk.

Last night Ray Wyre, one of Britain's leading consultants on sexual crime, said it would be "political suicide" for any sex-offender programme to agree to take Oliver on.

"Nearly all the organisations I am in contact with have been approached to have him," he said. "But the trouble is that the media are going to pursue him and these projects cannot afford the politics of it."

He added: "They have probably had to reassure the local community that the people they are working with are not too high-risk."

Mr Wyre said Oliver was part of a wider problem which involved more than 100 paedophiles who were convicted before 1991 and so are not

covered by the National Paedophile Register. Many of them are now being released back into the community without supervision. Mr Wyre said the answer was to create long-term secure establishments which were something between a hospital and a prison.

Oliver, who was jailed in 1989 after being convicted of the murder of 14-year-old Jason, throttled and gang-raped in a flat in east London, first turned himself into police last October. He had been released a month earlier after serving most of a 15-year sentence but had been driven out of accommodation in Dublin, Swindon, London, Liverpool and Manchester.

He remains in the police station 24 hours a day and during the past four months has introduced some "home comforts" to his cell, where he is said by police to be happy.

At the new year Oliver agreed he would be prepared to move to a secure hospital and undergo psychiatric treatment. But no institution will have him.

Sussex police said: "We are trying to find accommodation that would be most suitable to him and, yes, it is proving difficult. We are not looking just in Sussex and we continue to seek a solution." The problem over Oliver coincides with growing concern over treatment for paedophiles in jails.

All sex offenders sentenced to more than two years are supposed to undergo a sex-offender treatment programme, which is available in more than 15 jails and is advanced compared to such services in other countries. But many serious offenders are being kept in jails where no such treatment is available.

Monsoon guru finds he's fashionable on the Stock Market



Rags to riches: Peter Simon, below right, the founder of the chain which sells clothing inspired by the styles and colours of the Far East

Photograph: Rui Xavier

'The image is in brown rice and cheesecloth ... Some doubt it can still be successful'

Peter Simon, the founder of Monsoon, found himself £88m better off yesterday when a quarter of his company was floated on the Stock Market. Tomlin Blanchard analyses the appeal of the fashion chain which epitomises ethnic chic.

It all started on a trip to India in the early Seventies. Peter Simon, a former fishmonger salesman, purchased some locally made garments, and brought them back to London to sell from his Portobello Road market stall.

The first Monsoon store opened in 1973 in London's Beauchamp Place, and since then Mr Simon has opened 179 Monsoon and Accessorize shops. Combining mod-

ern design expertise with traditional materials and techniques, the company has traditionally sold a range of colourful handprinted cotton clothing and other natural fabrics. One of the first best sellers was a shaggy coat made from the wool of a sheep – a cross between a sheep and a goat.

Indeed, the shops have a loyal customer base. According to a company spokeswoman, she is typically aged between 25 and 45. "She is a customer who is not a slave to fashion, who loves the colour and the individual look of Monsoon clothes. However ... we feel that we are increasingly able to attract the customer who wants a stronger, simpler, more fashionable look."

Monsoon? It's for middle-aged women who were once hippies," was one fashion editor's response when asked for an opinion on the chain yesterday. "Women don't want to look frumpy. Everything is shaped like a tent. The colours are wrong and the shapes aren't right," was another comment.

The snooty fashion cognoscenti however, have never been the core customer for Monsoon. A 32-year-old social worker,

Anne Maher, pops into her local branch from time to time to see what's new. Her most recent purchase was a necklace from Monsoon's sister chain, Accessorize. It was £8.99, what Ms Maher describes as "cheap and cheerful".

But Monsoon has an image firmly rooted in the brown-rice eating, cheesecloth-wearing days of the Seventies. Some people doubt whether it can be successful in today's minimalist fashion climate.

"Monsoon? It's for middle-aged women who were once hippies," was one fashion editor's response when asked for an opinion on the chain yesterday. "Women don't want to look frumpy. Everything is shaped like a tent. The colours are wrong and the shapes aren't right," was another comment.

Monsoon is in a very strong position to move forward. As the merchandise in high street chains becomes increasingly interchangeable, it is Monsoon's very difference from the rest of the high street that the company should be exploiting.

Monsoon flotation, page 21



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Young choose life as New Deal offers escape from the dole

The New Deal will create a "get-up-and-go society", David Blunkett told Labour activists last night. Barrie Clement went to Wales to see how it may work on the ground.

Alun Evans began to "re-evaluate" his life when hunger forced him to pick up a chicken burger off the pavement.

He was in Swansea at the time, or was it Bristol? Or perhaps Manchester? He can't really remember. Alun, 22, had dropped out of his degree course in French, German and Business Studies at the University of Wales in Swansea with alcohol and drug problems, made worse by a mountain of debt.

At first he lived with friends, but then lived on the streets. After months of wandering around western Britain, he went back to Swansea and entered a "foyer" - a place of refuge for the homeless which attempts to rehabilitate them.

Now Alun is offering advice to other people who have hit hard times. He is one of the first participants in the Gov-

ernment's New Deal for jobless 18- to 24-year-olds. He has taken up one of the four options offered to young people who have been unemployed for six months.

He has opted to take up a job with a voluntary organisation - in this case the Citizens Advice Bureau - where he will also receive training.

The former student is critical of the lack of preparation among bureaucrats in Swansea for their role in piloting the New Deal. No one knows precisely what kind of day-release training he will receive as part of his employment - a stipulation of the programme.

Yet Alun is grateful for the chance and believes that other young people in his position will benefit from it.

Far to the west in Pembroke Dock, Dale Sinclair-Jones, 18, has been whisked off the dole to work as a trainee car mechanic.

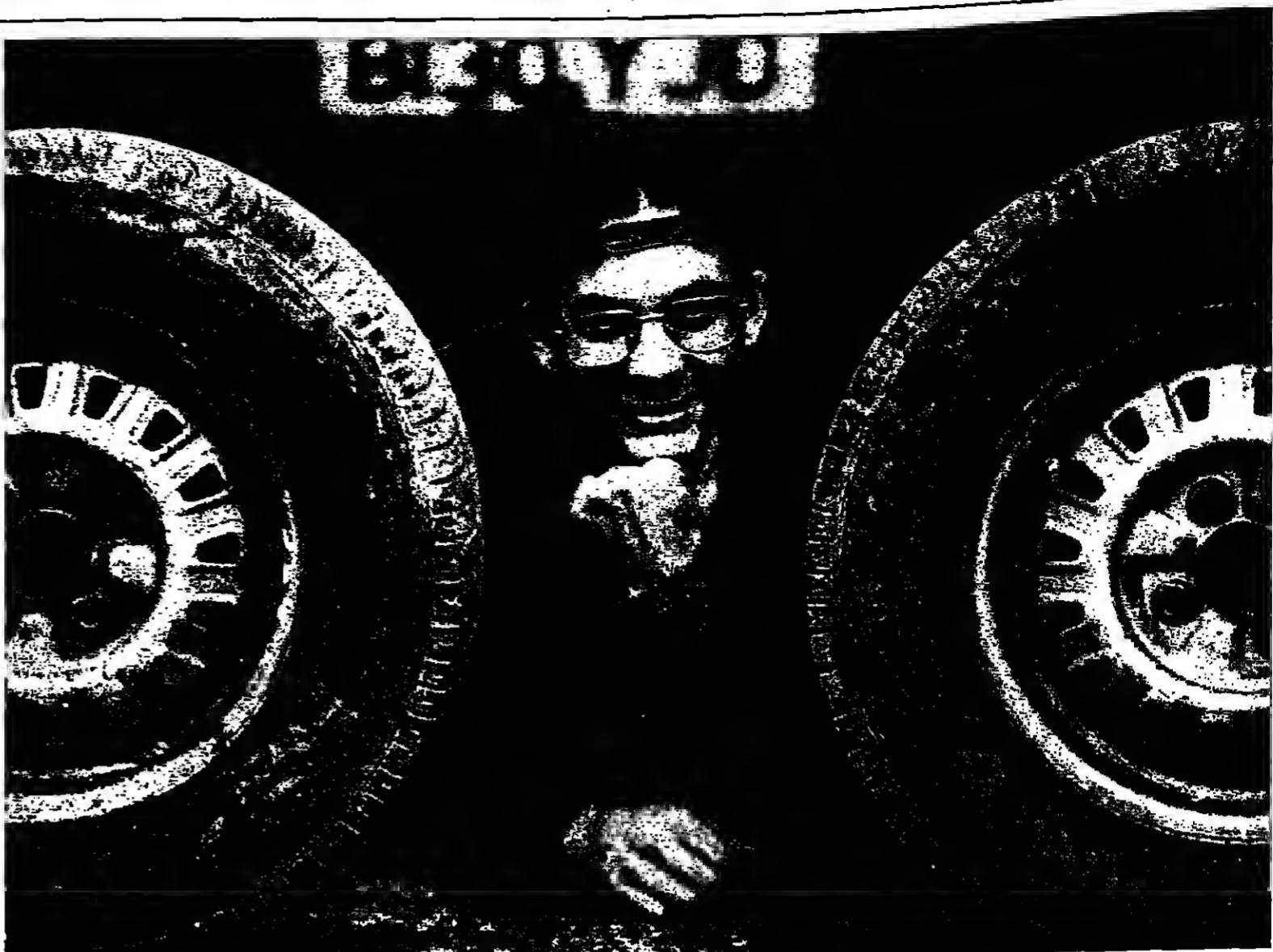
He left school with a handful of GCSEs and went on to gain qualifications in technology, but his ability to secure employment has been severely undermined by his profound dyslexia. Having endured months of boredom at home while drawing benefit, he entered the "Gateway" to the New Deal which evaluates

each young person's needs, his or her attributes and the kind of job they might want.

Dale was taken on by West End Motors, a small firm of car repairers for six months. For that period the company will receive £60 a week. Dale has recently been told that when the subsidy comes to an end the firm will continue to employ him and he now hopes to become a fully trained mechanic.

As part of the Gateway to the programme those with literacy and numeracy difficulties - and those with more serious problems - are given specialist counselling by people of a similar age to themselves. After up to four months participants will be expected to take up one of four options: subsidised employment; full-time training or education; a placement with the Government's Environment Task Force, or a job with a voluntary organisation.

As Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer says, there is no "fifth" option. Those who refuse to indicate their preference among the options, are compulsorily directed to one of them. If they refuse they can lose up to 40 per cent of their state benefit.



Wheels of fortune: Dale Sinclair-Jones, who has been whisked off the dole to work as a trainee car mechanic

Photograph: Phil Rees/Dragon

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Mutiny threat as big cuts hit poor

The Government faces a Labour mutiny over plans to cut £65m off the benefits of some of the poorest people in the country.

A cross-party alliance backed by more than 25 Labour MPs could force Harriet Harman, Secretary of State for Social Security, to drop a controversial proposal to penalise unemployed people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance.

As *The Independent* exclusively reported last month, the proposal has been condemned by the Social Security Advisory Committee, the official scrutineers of all welfare orders, who warned of the severe impact on a hard-pressed and vulnerable group, including the homeless.

The Jobseeker's Allowance (Amendment) Regulations, impose the benefit cut by extending from three days to seven the time during which no benefit claim can be made.

The Liberal Democrats' spokesman, David Rendel, was first to oppose the proposed statutory order but he was quickly joined by William Hague and other senior Tories - in spite of the fact that the proposal had been initiated by the last government.

Initially, Labour had opposed the Conservative plan, but Ms Harman now argues that the action is required to stay in line with Conservative spending plans.

It is already known that when the Cabinet reviewed last year's decision to impose benefit cuts on lone parents' child benefit, a number of senior ministers agreed that it would have been better - in retrospect - not to have done it.

Mr Rendel said last night: "The civil rebellion threatens to exceed the revolt over the lone parent benefit cut, when 47 Labour MPs backed a Liberal Democrat vote."

He said the benefit cut was both unfair and unnecessary.

A Commons motion tabled by Audrey Wise - the Labour MP who led last year's backbench revolt on lone parents' benefit - regrets that ministers are proceeding with the Tory regulations, and notes that "the Tory front bench has changed its position and is now opposing its own proposal, and therefore calls on the Government to withdraw these Tory regulations which even the Tories have now deserted".

— Anthony Bevins

Lib Dems get female shadows.

Every one of the Liberal Democrats' 46 MPs is to have a female "shadow", the party announced yesterday.

Worried by his party's poor performance in getting women elected last May - the number went down from four out of 26 MPs to three out of 46 - Paddy Ashdown asked his women's spokesperson, Jackie Ballard, to set up the scheme. She has drawn up a list of the "key tasks" MPs perform, with answering letters at the top and speech-making in only fifth place. Each shadow will be expected to experience or observe each task over a six-month period.

The first six MPs - Ms Ballard, Norman Baker, John Burnett, Simon Hughes, Andrew Stunnell and Steven Webb - have begun their programmes.

Ms Ballard said the scheme would start by targeting women thinking of standing in elections for the Scottish and Welsh assemblies and for Europe. She said it proved the party was taking the issue seriously: "It is a big thing to ask of MPs, most of whom have quite well-developed egos, to have someone following them around and seeing what they do warts and all."

— Fran Abrams,

Political Correspondent

مكفا عن الأصل

BRITISH GA

Silicone breasts 'are safe'

Silicone breast implants do not damage the immune system and do not cause connective-tissue disease among women who have them, according to the latest study of one of the most vexed issues in medicine.

No good evidence has been produced that implants cause such problems, the British Medical Journal says, yet US manufacturers have paid \$4bn (£2.48bn) to women with them and in Britain the Department of Health has set up an inquiry, due to report in spring.

The new study found that the incidence of immunological disorders in 7,000 Swedish women with implants was no higher than in 3,000 women who had had surgery to reduce the size of their breasts.

In an editorial the BMJ says the results add weight to the conclusion that implants are safe, although they are associated with less serious problems such as hardening and occasional rupture.

"It is difficult to see how epidemiological studies will shed more light on this," it says.

In a letter to the journal, three plastic surgeons question the granting of legal aid to a woman with silicone implants who claims they are to blame for her child's stomach cramps, skin problems and food allergies after breast-feeding.

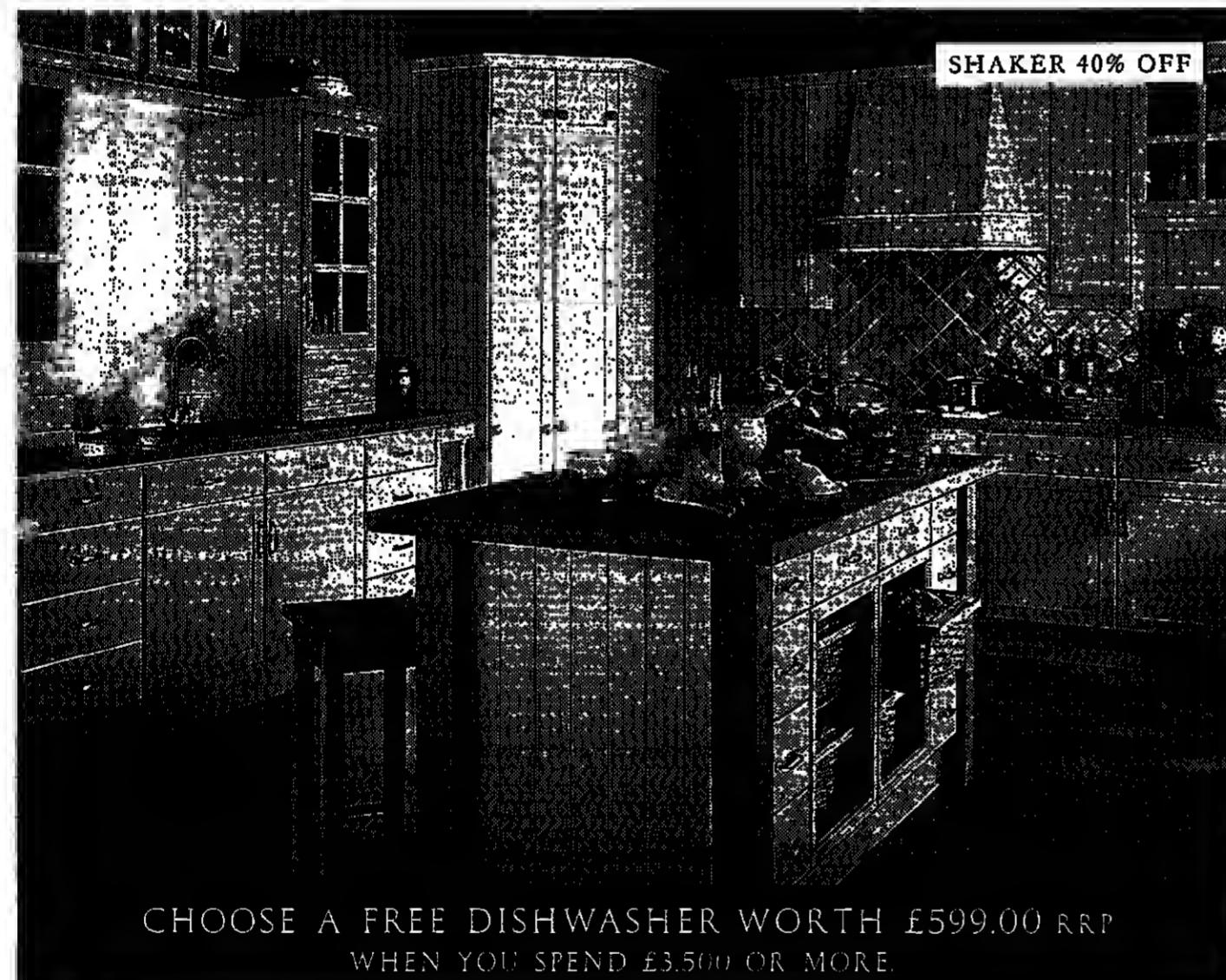
The authors say silicone is used for teats for infant bottles and is a constituent of baby-milk formula.

— Jeremy Laurence
Health Editor



Bang-on: The Duke of Windsor shooting (left) and the trousers he was wearing (centre) on display in New York, some of the items from the Duke and Duchess's Paris home to be auctioned by Sotheby's. Photograph: Reuters

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TND 19

Praise, not marks out of ten, seen as the key to school success

Teachers should stop routinely giving children marks or grades, London University experts said yesterday. Judith Judd, Education Editor, looks at startling new evidence on the best way to raise standards.

could improve and what they need to learn next could raise standards by as much as two GCSE grades in each subject over the country.

Professor Paul Black, one of the researchers and architect of the proposals for the first national tests 10 years ago, said the present government tests, targets and league tables might be counter-productive.

Tests and targets do not in themselves raise standards, the study argues and ministers need to focus on how children are assessed in the classroom. Dr Dylan William, head of the King's College school of education, denied their views meant a return to the progressive notions of the sixties.

Competition and marking which compares pupils, such as gold stars or ranking, should also be abandoned because they make the least able give up. King's College researchers who reviewed the effect of teachers' assessment of 10,000 pupils from all over the world during the past decade found marking or "feedback" is more important than almost anything else in determining progress.

The study shows pupils who have the same teachers progress if they receive comments on their work but not if they receive only marks or even marks and comments.

Explanations of how pupils

were not against national tests or giving pupils marks or grades once a term or once a year.

"But the place of marks needs to change. Too much emphasis on marks means pupils who are finding it difficult tend to give up."

The effect on able students could be equally unhelpful, he said.

Because they nearly always received high marks, they sometimes coasted. "I once gave the

cleverest kid in the class E for effort. His parents were not happy." Earlier this week, Chris Woodhead, chief inspector of schools, said marking was not tough enough in some schools and teachers were not using assessment results to raise standards.

Dave Anderson, head teacher of St Chad's Secondary School in Essex, who supported the findings, said he knew he had not always marked work as well as he should.

"I remember timing with colleagues how quickly we could get through a set of book. We focused on 'well done' or 'good effort' without ever explaining why it was good."

Prof Black said the change of direction called for in the study would not mean longer hours for overloaded teachers. "This is about working smarter, not working harder."

Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers, said: "I'm just pulling myself down from the ceiling. These people need to try out some of these crazy ideas in the classroom. Teachers would spend all their time assessing instead of teaching. Marks out of ten and percentages produce a much clearer picture for pupils and parents."

Advisers cross swords on a class improvement act

Inspectors yesterday described Birmingham local education authority, a testbed for many Government policies, as "a success story". But, says Judith Judd, Education Editor, the report from the Office for Standards in Education highlights a dispute between two senior government advisers on how to improve schools.

philosophy" between the report and the authority about how schools improve. The report from Ofsted, headed by Chris Woodhead, chief inspector of schools, says higher standards have more to do with Prof Brighouse's leadership than the authority's school-improvement policies. The two men are joint vice-chairmen of the Government's Standards Task Force.

While Prof Brighouse believes that Birmingham's success offers hope for all inner-city areas, the report argues that the city's approach does not provide a model for others, partly because of the chief education officer's inspirational leadership.

Prof Brighouse thinks that bad schools should be dealt with quietly and discreetly, whereas the report appears to support the Government's policy of "naming and shaming" schools.

It argues that the city "will need to be more open about confronting failure."

Prof Brighouse cites the authority's policy of setting targets for improvement as "a key ingredient" in its success. The report says the policy has little to do with success, because schools did not really understand how the targets worked.

Prof Brighouse said: "This is a really good report and it offers hope for urban areas. Whatever the odds, you can have tremendous rates of improvement if there is political will and good management."

"There is a wider debate about school improvement and there is a conflict of philosophy. It boils down to what is the right mixture of pressure and support for schools."

The report points out that, despite improvements, Birmingham's position in the national league tables remains low - 96 out of 131 at GCSE. It suggests that the authority needs to concentrate on the things it does well and that it may have embarked on too many initiatives.

Inspectors criticise the local authority's policy of asking schools to set targets to improve on their previous best. "Some schools ... were celebrating progress that was at best modest and, very occasionally, entirely spurious."

One school hailed an improvement in its prospectus of almost 50 per cent in its GCSE results. This was an increase from 11.5 per cent, getting five or more top grades to 16 per cent, a difference of just nine pupils.

Calls to check prisoners for mental illness

Almost half the inmates who commit suicide have a known previous history of psychiatric illness, according to a report published today.

The study says that jailing mentally disordered offenders can worsen some conditions and prevent people from being properly treated. It describes locking up psychiatrically disturbed people as "inhumane".

The Penal Affairs Consortium, which represents 34 organisations concerned with the prison system, also calls for facilities to be set up at courts and police stations to test whether offenders are mentally ill.

The report, *An Unsuitable Place for Treatment*, says that 47 per cent or 28 of the 60 inmates who killed themselves in prisons in England and Wales in 1995/96 had a known previous psychiatric history. Last year, a record 70 inmates committed suicide in prisons in England and Wales.

The report recommends the setting up of specialist facilities to deal with mentally disordered offenders and defendants.

— Jason Bennett
Crime Correspondent

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Germany's jobless rate rises to 4.8m

local welfare office. But crowds elsewhere were small and docile, as in Cologne, where most of the participants were leftist students anxious to hurry home from the cold. They circled the building once, set fire to an effigy, and dispersed.

In many towns, notably in Bonn, where the opposition and government clashed over the issue of unemployment, no one would volunteer to go out into the streets. From the organisers' point of view, things can only get better. Perhaps people will take notice when the magic figure of 5 million is breached, possibly next month.

With 302,000 more jobless in January than in the previous month, the headline unemployment figure stood yesterday at 4.82 million. The latest statistics also show the gap between east and west is widening.

— Imre Karacs, Cologne



Small cheer: The Prince of Wales and Arthur C Clarke. The accusations have cast a pall over the visit by the Prince, who leaves Sri Lanka today for Nepal



Photographs: Rex Features

Clarke hits back at press claims of paedophilia

Arthur C Clarke's knighthood is on hold owing to accusations of paedophilia. But Peter Popham in Colombo says the furore has only mystified people in Sri Lanka, where he is greatly revered.

After stone-walling the British royal press pack all week, Clarke, the visionary science-fiction writer and alleged paedophile, turned up at the state banquet thrown for the Prince of Wales in Colombo last night and treated the invited guests to a persuasive exhibition of good spirits. "This is not Arthur Clarke, it's a clone," he told them when they cornered him sipping orange juice in a reception room at the President's house before the dinner.

"You know I can't say anything to you bastards - I am taking legal advice." He then declaimed the lines of verse by Humbert Wolfe: "I cannot hope to bribe or twist the British journalist but seeing what the man will do unbridled, there's no occasion to."

Asked about his investiture as knight, he said: "I am anxious to get the thing done as soon as possible." He recollects a previous meeting with the Prince and Princess of Wales in 1985, at the premiere of the film *2010*. Earlier Clarke had issued a press release repeating his denial of allegations last week by the *Sunday Mirror*: "Having always had a particular dislike to paedophiles, few charges can be more revolting to me than he classed as one," it ran.

"As I have already said, the allegations are wholly denied. Indeed, the circumstances are such nonsense that I have found it difficult to treat them with the contempt they deserve. My conscience is perfectly clear."

Before the banquet he shook hands and exchanged pleasantries with Prince Charles. The Prince leaves Sri

Lanka today for Nepal, the next leg of his South Asian tour. There is speculation that he might find a quiet moment at Westminster House, the British High Commissioner's residence, to dub the writer before he departs. The Clarke saga has thrown a pall over the first week of the Prince's tour. In his novel *Rendezvous With Rama*, set in 2130, Clarke wrote: "It was a mild nuisance having two 'Sirs' on one small committee; in these latter days, knighthood was an honour which few Englishmen escaped."

But when announced in the New Year's Honours List, Clarke's knighthood seemed richly deserved after a lifetime of distinction in science, as well as science fiction. For honour to be tarnished, or even aborted, by allegations which many Sri Lankans found incredible, seemed all wrong.

According to the *Sunday Mirror*, Clarke was said to have admitted to having sex with boys who had reached the age of puberty. It was also stated that he played table-tennis with schoolboys "at a notorious pick-up haunt for perverts called The Otters Aquatic Club".

It is true that Clarke regularly goes to the Otters Club, but this description caused particular outrage in Colombo, as the club is a byword for middle-class respectability. Scepticism about the allegations increased during the week, not least because the writer responsible, Graham Johnson, was allegedly sacked from the *News of the World* for fabricating an encounter with the Beast of Bodmin.

In Sri Lanka, Clarke's reputation remains almost entirely intact. The *Mirror* story was reported only on one radio programme. Newspapers have carried nothing about the allegations. In the *Lanka Monthly Digest*'s Golden Jubilee Special on the "Fifty greatest Sri Lankans since independence," "Sir Arthur C Clarke," as he is styled, is the only foreign-born resident to be featured.

German MPs huff and puff, and stub out smoking Bill

The German parliament yesterday rejected a Bill that would have placed strict limits on smoking in public buildings and the workplace.

After a heated two-hour debate, the Bundestag voted by 336-256 against the measure, which would have banned smoking in public buildings and public transportation. It would also have required companies to set up separate rooms for smokers.

— Reuters, Bonn

Little Mermaid charge

Michael Poulsen, a TV cameraman, was detained for 13 days pending investigations into charges that he decapitated Copenhagen's Little Mermaid statue; he was charged with causing malicious damage to public property. He was first to film the statue after it was vandalised a month ago. He pleaded not guilty and lodged an appeal against the ruling. Police said they suspected he carried out the beheading with the help of unknown accomplices.

— Reuters, Copenhagen

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Ancestors of the tin snail crawl out from a French barn and go on display

Like rediscovered dinosaurs from an automotive Lost World, three ancestors of the Citroën Deux Chevaux, mislaid for nearly 60 years, will go on show in Paris today.

The cars, complete with the corrugated bonnets and flimsy deckchair seats are the first pre-production models of one of the great icons of post-war France.

They were built in 1938, 10 years before the cheap, low-powered French answer to the Volkswagen Beetle - TPB, *Tres Petite Voiture* - reached the public. When the Second World War broke out in September 1939, the cars were hidden under bales of straw in a barn near Chartres to prevent the technology falling into enemy hands. (It may seem unlikely that the Wehrmacht would have coveted the Deux Chevaux, but it was classified as top secret at the time).

Three years ago the cars were unearthed, filthy, their bonnets stoved in by the weight

of the bales, but intact. They will be the *pièces de résistance* at *Retromobile*, a 10-day exhibition of classic French and foreign cars which opens today at the Port de Versailles in Paris.

The Deux Chevaux, also famous, or infamous, for its canvas roof, dashboard gearshift and infuriating folding windows, ceased production in France in 1988 and in Portugal in 1990.

Seven million were produced over 40 years. The original brief of the Citroën designers in 1935 - two years before the first VW Beetle - was to produce a car to convert rural France from the horse-cart. More precisely, the intention was to devise a low-price car "capable of transporting two farmers in clogs, 50kg of potatoes or a barrel of wine at 60 kilometres an hour, consuming three litres of petrol for every 100 kilometres". Aesthetic considerations were "of no importance".

The production models of

the 2CV exceeded these targets, in terms of petrol consumption at any rate. With care, the car would give well over 50 miles to the gallon, one of the most economical vehicles ever made.

It was, however, never very comfortable at anything more than 50 mph and its death knell was sounded by the building of autoroutes in France from the 1970s onwards. Thousands survive in the French countryside but they are becoming an increasingly rare sight.

No attempt has been made to restore the rediscovered prototypes in working order; they will be displayed just as they were found.

Another 2CV was unearthed, in pieces, at the same farm, close to an old Citroën test track, several years ago. This was a survivor from a small production run, built in 1939. This car was restored and is now running around with its original two-cylinder engine.

— John Lichfield, Paris



Going nowhere fast: Three vintage pre-production Citroen 2CVs, on display in Paris

Photograph: Alastair Miller

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Anger grows in Italy over skiers killed by US aircraft

Initial shock over the horrific accident caused by a low-flying US military aircraft at a Dolomites ski resort is quickly turning to fury over the presence in Italy of the planes which have been an irritant for years. Andrew Gumbel reports from Rome.

The Italian government sharply increased pressure on the United States yesterday to admit responsibility for the deaths of 20 skiers whose cable car in the Dolomites resort of Cavalese was knocked to the ground by a low-flying US military training aircraft.

Although it seems inconceivable that Italy would allow the Americans to pack up their military bases and go home, anti-US sentiment has reached heights unseen since the darkest days of the Cold War. The accident has prompted talk of colonialist arrogance and "Rambo in the sky", reminiscent of a time when Italians, particularly those on the left, strongly resented being treated as little more than a geopolitical domino by the Pentagon and the White House.

America's image has been tarnished further by the Clinton-Lewinsky sex scandal. "Down with Clinton, you're just a womaniser and a warmonger, a prostitute to power and war," was the reaction of one priest in Cavalese, Don Tommaso Volcan, as he saw the mutilated bodies and twisted metal on the snow-covered slopes near his church.

The Americans are not the only scapegoat, however. The Italians have also turned considerable anger on their own government. The provincial council in Trento has published a letter from Mr Andreatta in December 1996 explaining that low-flying exercises were an essential part of military training and that inhabited areas could not be avoided because Italy was too densely populated.

Quebec goes in search of new (French-speaking) blood

Give me your huddled masses, yearning to have jobs and wide open spaces. Must be young, French-speaking and well-educated. Knowledge of ice-hockey an advantage.

This is the message which the Quebec immigration minister, André Boisclair, will bring to France next month when he leads the province's first ministerial recruitment drive in the mother country.

Mr Boisclair will visit Paris and several French regions to encourage young people to come to Quebec in a three-year plan to boost immigration. Belgium,

Switzerland, and Franche-Comté North Africa will also be targeted, but Quebec is especially keen to increase French migration, now only 2,000 a year.

Quebec has 10.4 per cent unemployment, not much better than the rate in France. But it also has one of the lowest birth rates in the developed world and an ageing population. The Quebec authorities are determined to maintain a majority of French-speakers, partly for cultural reasons, partly to keep alive the dream of eventual separation from Canada.

— John Lichfield

'If I had been sent back to prison, I would have died'

Sheila Bowler was a respectable middle-class piano teacher – until she was wrongly accused of murdering an elderly aunt. She tells *Graia Langdon-Down* how four years in prison shook her middle-class sensibilities to the core.

As Sheila Bowler stood in the dock at the Old Bailey yesterday awaiting the verdict of her trial for murder, she shook in terror. "The jury looked very solemn. I glanced across the courtroom at my daughter and she was in tears. Then they said 'Not Guilty' and all grinned at me. I was weak with relief."

When her confused and elderly aunt wandered into a Sussex river and died in 1992, Sheila Bowler's life became a nightmare. A 68-year-old widow whose life revolved around her family, her piano teaching and her home town of Rye, Sheila was found guilty in July 1993 of murdering 89-year-old Florence Jackson. She lost her first appeal in May 1995 and served four years of her minimum 12-year life sentence before judges at her second appeal last summer ordered the retrial and released her on bail.

The case hinged on whether Aunt Flo could have walked unaided to her death in the River Brede in East Sussex after Sheila had left her alone in the car while she went to get help with a flat tyre. Yesterday the jury decided it was possible and cleared Sheila of pushing her aunt into the river. Her motive for killing Aunt Flo, whom she had cared for without complaint for years, was said to have been greed – the £252 weekly cost of Aunt Flo's nursing home was supposedly whittling away the value of the flat the aunt had left to Sheila in her will.

As Sheila resumes her life in the three bedroom house overlooking Rye, which she and her husband Bob bought 30 years ago, it is only the bag stamped HM PRISON SERVICE blocking a hole in the greenhouse roof that gives any hint of the 1,475 days that she spent as prisoner T/3389.

She is still bemused how she could have changed overnight from respectable widow to callous murderer. The Daily Mail's headline, "The aunt, the black widow and a murder most English", summed up the coverage when she was sentenced.

"I can't believe now how stupid I was to think prison was an impossibility. I felt the whole



End of the ordeal: Sheila Bowler, above, with her daughter Jane and, below, Aunt Flo whom Sheila was accused of killing

Emma Boam/KNP

time during my arrest and first trial that what was happening was unreal and nothing to do with me. I knew I hadn't done anything and, in my blind faith in the legal system, I just thought it would soon be over."

She was so confident that when she went to see a barrister to discuss suing the hospital where her husband had died unexpectedly after routine surgery in 1992, she only mentioned in passing that she was facing "a bit of legal bother". The barrister was horrified when she told him she had been charged with murder.

It was that very detachment that helped confirm her as a cool, calculating killer in the eyes of the police and the jury. Too blunt and emotionally buttoned up for her own good, her case divided opinion even in her home town.

Prison shook her to the very core of her middle-class sensibilities. She remembers with painful clarity being driven to Holloway in a taxi, squashed between two prison officers. She was not allowed to say goodbye to her children – Simon, now 31, a customs officer, Jane, three years his junior and a talented cellist, and step-daughter Elizabeth, 51. On arrival, she was strip-searched, warned not to trust anyone, and sent in a dormitory on the psychiatric wing, automatically designated

to her. She states she finds it difficult to accept staff, some of whom are half her age, telling her when to get up, when to eat, etc."

Sheila quickly slipped into prison slang – talking of women "crutching drugs (hiding them inside themselves) during visits, "squat searches" over a mirror during strip searches and "room spins" (searches). She was called "bloody murderer" when she first arrived at Bulwold Hall, a top security prison in Essex, to serve the first stage of her sentence. But the other inmates, most a third her age, soon nicknamed her Supergran after seeing her jog 21 times round the death row.

They were like animals in a cage. I just wanted to escape from it all, so I made my bed, covered my head with a blanket and was so exhausted that I fell asleep straight away." Her ability to sleep through almost any trauma helped her survive, she believes.

Sheila threw herself into cleaning the chapel, organising the library or handing out refreshments during visits, railing against the administration and the slackness of the other inmates in her diary. Her personal officer wrote at one point, "Sheila regards her peers as naughty schoolchildren and she misses the stimulation of the intellectual conversation she is so

used to. She states she finds it difficult to accept staff, some of whom are half her age, telling her when to get up, when to eat, etc."

Despite her horror of prison, she went back to Holloway in visit friends. "I know how much visitors mean. Some women had no one. My experience has certainly made me more understanding about what can happen to people."

When she was released last summer, Jane immediately asked for her clothes to wash – "they smell of prison," Jane remembers with a shudder. All Sheila wanted was to sleep in her own bed, have a bath in peace, and walk beside the sea.

Once released on bail, her pension was restored. But the conviction cost her about £52,000 in lost income. She will now seek advice on whether she can claim compensation. It is ironic that, while Sheila did not need Aunt Flo's legacy,

she was too strong a woman to have been sent back to prison, she does now. Most of her savings went on her case. But the £18,000 from the sale of Aunt Flo's flat last year went to relatives because of her conviction. "And some of them had never even bothered to send Fin a Christmas card," she says pointedly.

Those last years behind bars continue to exact a price. While very close to her mother, Jane is moving to Scotland to rebuild her life after putting her career on hold to fight for Sheila's freedom. "I wish I had her strength," says Jane sadly. "I had such a happy childhood in Rye but I can't bear it now – the gossip was really malicious."

Her mother, on the other hand, strides round Rye, unconcerned by the sideways glances. "It won't be long before they have someone else to gossip about," she says wryly.

A PRISON DIARY

Holloway, Monday, 12 July 1993: when the word "Guilty" was pronounced in court, my only feeling was disbelief ... Charles Byers and Emma Kerr [her lawyers] came down to the cell to see me. The best Byers could think of [to say] was "At least you won't die in there."

Monday, 6 September 1993: I could weep at the sad spectacle they [the other prisoners] presented yesterday in chapel. Most of them are between 17 and 23 – most on drugs and many with several children. I have never seen such a dejected group of human beings. They are here for minor offences (apart from drug-dealing) such as non-payment of poll tax or TV licence. No way should they be locked up ... it only magnifies their deep sense of guilt and inadequacy.

Tuesday, 7 September 1993: Can always find things to do but nothing takes away the immense feeling of solitude and rage I feel. Do wish I didn't feel so miserable when I wake in the morning. It's not so bad once the day gets going. Motivation is so difficult to keep going and it is only nine weeks since I came here. It might as well be 9,000 weeks.

Wednesday, 22 September 1993: A really nice officer let me have a bath at 4.30 today. Then she said I could sit and watch TV. What a treat to see a bit of news uninterrupted. She didn't lock me in until 8pm. It was so peaceful – I felt almost human again.

In November 1993 Sheila was moved to Bullwood Hall in Essex, one of two high security women's prisons.

Tuesday, November 9 1993: [The wing] is ghetty – 12 mini-rooms each about 12ft high and only 9ft by 8ft. It is cold – the walls are cream-painted brick – and there is constant piped music ... horrible feeling of claustrophobia. Window in my room is 6ft from the ground and that is the only daylight.

Wednesday, 15 December 1993: Wing being decorated. Can't understand how people can be so jolly. Maybe if I wasn't here for life I would feel differently ... 7pm: just heard my tariff is 12 years. What a Christmas present!

Tuesday, 22 February 1994: "Really looking forward to darling Jane's visit this afternoon and she was so miserable and unhappy – perhaps because she was alone and didn't have to keep up appearances. How does God expect me to bear this pain and anguish?"

Sheila returned briefly to Holloway for her first unsuccessful appeal in April 1995.

Monday, 10 April 1995: The journey to the Court of Appeal took only 20 minutes though I felt lucky to get there at all because the hassle of getting out of this place was incredible. Nobody remembered to wake me, though of course I was up. Two pieces of white bread were pushed through the hatch with marge, two sausages and a tea bag, sugar and no water. At 7.30am I was taken to reception down four flights of stairs and subjected to another strip search – ha up and pants down – talk about, humiliating.

Sheila was transferred to Holloway in May 1996.

Saturday, 3 August 1996: I am writing this at 10am. We have been locked in since 12.15 yesterday and we discovered this morning that the cause is a missing pair of scissors ... you can imagine the racket being produced from all the rooms – screaming, shouting, banging of windows, sheets and clothes of all sorts being sent out of the windows alight. We were told at breakfast that the last time something was missing all inmates were locked in for four days.

Soon after this, despair set in and the diary stopped.

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Cliffie Stone

Clifford Gilpin Snyder (Cliffie Stone), musician, broadcaster and record company executive; born Stockton, California 1 March 1917; twice married (three sons, one daughter); died Santa Clarita, California 17 January 1996.

The sprawling metropolis of 1990s Los Angeles may not be the most obvious candidate for "country music capital of America", but from the late 1930s to the early 1950s it was close to being just that. The Great Depression had seen a huge influx of dispossessed Southerners into California and many brought with them a taste for "hillbilly" music with the inevitable result that dedicated shows dominated local radio programming.

The radio station KFVD's *Covered Wagon Jubilee*, hosted by Stuart Hamblen, was among the most popular of these and featured a large, bearded banjo named Herman. "The Herman" Snyder had been a musical fixture in the area for nearly two decades and had taught his son Cliffie to play bass guitar. The young Snyder seemed intent on a musical career and while still in his teens joined the cast of the show. Working under the name Cliffie Stonehead — later shortened to Stone — he augmented his bass-playing by serving as announcer, disc jockey and comic and was soon fronting shows of his own. He also performed in the

house band at the Pasadena Community Playhouse and in the hotel dance bands of both Anson Weeks and Freddie Slack. It was whilst with the latter that he made his recording debut in 1942 for the fledgling Capitol Records, a label with whom he would enjoy a fruitful association. He became assistant to Capitol's head producer Lee Gillette and, as the label's "expert" on hillbilly talent, brought a number of important acts onto its roster, including Merle Travis, Tex Williams, Jimmy Wakely and Hank Thompson.

The hits turned out by Stone's stable — including Williams's "Smokin' Smoke! Smoke!" (That Cigarette)" (1947) and Wakely's "One Has My Name (The Other Has My Heart)" (1948) — are credited with keeping Capitol buoyant at a time when it was still struggling to establish itself. As he later recalled: "We kept [Capitol] alive. Nat Cole used to hang around our sessions. He'd show up just amazed. He couldn't believe these guys could just play without any music or anything."

Stone himself recorded several sides, enjoying hits with "Silver Stars, Purple Sage, Eyes of Blue" (1947) and a version of the Wiley Walker/Gene Sullivan standard "When My Blue Moon Turns To Gold Again" (1948). He and Merle Travis also penned three outright classics: "No Vacancy", "Divorce Me C.O.D." and "So Round, So Firm, So Fully Packed".

— Paul Wadey



Stone: 'So round, so firm, so fully packed'

When you next use a parking meter, or cannot find a parking space next to one, bless, or curse, according to your inclination, John Hay.

When you next want to get to a remote destination by rail, and find that the line was probably used by your parents, you will almost certainly curse Hay; for he was the junior minister at the Department of Transport — under the flamboyant Ernest Marples — who, over four years from the Conservative general election victory of 1959, devised and introduced meters, and it was he who implemented the swinging cuts in the rail network which Lord Beeching recommended to the government of Harold Macmillan. If you are sympathetic to so-called "green" issues, you may also blame Hay for being the executive minister who put in place the massive road-building programme visualised by Marples.

As a young man, Hay was an immensely successful politician;

he was not unlike the young William Hague. He made his first — intensely dramatic — Tory Party Conference speech in 1946, at the age of 28, then unheard-of triumph by a strapping, Hague, of course, made his first big impact at 15. But Hay was destined to decline into political obscurity or unpopularity, because of the measures he adopted; Hague has gone on to acquire at least the hope of glory.

Hay had seemed set fair for great success. At the age of 11 he worked for his father's campaign to become a member of Brighton council, thereby acquiring very early political experience. In 1947 as Chairman of the Young Conservative movement, he entertained both Winston Churchill and Anthony Eden at the YAC annual conference. The two great men were sensible of the desirability of speaking to, this gathering for, at that time, the Young Conservatives were the largest voluntary youth organisation in the

world. Only a few months ago, their numbers in sharp decline, and their social behaviour judged outrageous by the party establishment, they were abolished by William Hague.

Until 1970, when Edward Heath passed him over for a ministerial job, John Hay made a quite dashing impression. He was the son of a local solicitor, and went to grammar school in Brighton, but he was said to have Etonian airs. He was handsome and debonair, and he had high ambitions, but something, somewhere, went wrong.

Perhaps it was that Hay had too much independence of mind, and was too ready to speak that mind forcefully. In 1947, for example, he was adopted as the Conservative Party's parliamentary candidate for Brixton. Brixton was not a winnable seat but Hay, like other youngsters then and now, was expected to blood himself in a hopeless fight. Within months

— Patrick Cosgrove

of the ship at Boulogne who took him under his wing and smuggled him into London sans passport, while sundry Italians fill in the background with evocative songs and verses.

In London Gaetano had to find sympathetic Italian restaurants who would allow him to "play" his harp in their back gardens, safe from the police who were out to catch itinerant musicians who might upset im-

portant — or sick — residents. When all his resources were no more, an Italian barber sent him to see Dame Gabriel Rossetti, who was enchanted by the boy and introduced him to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, as grinder of colours, model and student painter, until he made his own name with the mosaics in the great hall of Mr Debenham's grandioses house in Holland Park, and finally became

naturalised, sponsored by William Morris.

Carrick ends with his recollected enjoyment of how he mended the family rift since his father Gordon Craig, already married, closed with Gaetano's favourite daughter Elena. At the age of six his parents told him to approach this unknown grandparent in Italian. "Nonno, nonno," he cried out. Gaetano was captivated.

— Patrick Newley

Edward Craig

All is not lost for those readers intrigued by the sound of Edward Craig's unfulfilled biography of his grandfather Gae-ano McC., wife Marie-Jacqueline Lancaster [further to the obituary by Tom Craig, 23 January]. On 25 November 1994 BBC Radio 3 broadcast a magical feature, *Orpheus Ascending*, produced by Piers Plowright. Here Carrick/Craig recounts the story of his young grandfather's epic

walk in 1860 from "the instep" of Italy through France and on to London with only his harp and asses' skin cloak — no money, no baggage, few words of French and fewer English. Carrick acts out, with infectious enthusiasm, all the characters and their attendant noises — Gaetano, villagers, the brigands with whom he made friends, the Italian mammas who befriended him, the memorable captain

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

DEATHS

RHYNNE: Mrs Sarah Murici, died peacefully at home on Wednesday 4 February, aged 91 years. Private family funeral on Tuesday 17 February, but all friends welcome to Bramblewood on 17 February from 1pm.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR GENEVA'S BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Weddings, Anniversaries, In Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the Geneva Editor, *The Independent*, Canadian House, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DA, tel: 0870-222 2022 or faxed on 0870-222 2020, and are signed at £4.50 a line (£8.75 extra). OTHER Gazette announcements (not marriages, funerals, forthcoming anniversaries) must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £10 a line (£20 extra). Please include a daytime telephone number.

OBITUARIES e-mail address: obituaries@independent.co.uk

CIVIL ENGAGEMENTS

• Prince of Wales undertakes an official visit to Nepal.

Hanging of the Guard

• Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment and the Queen's Life Guards at Horse Guards Parade, No. 1 Company, Colours and General Colours, Queen's Guard, at Bucklebury Palace, Ascot, and presented by the Irish Guards.

Birthdays

The Right Rev Edwin Barnes, Bishop of Suffragan of Rotherham, 63; Mr Mike Batt, popular music composer and arranger, 48; Rabbi Lionel Blue, broadcaster, 48; Mr Nicholas Brett, Editor, *Radio Times*, 48; Sir Dennis Buckley, former Lord Justice of Appeal, 92; Mr Peter Cadbury, former company chairman, 80; Mr John Flemming, Warden, Wadham College, Oxford, 57; Miss Zsa Zsa Gabor, actress, 78; Mr Tom Harris, former ambassador to Korea, 53; Dr Christopher Hill, former Master, Balliol College, Oxford, 56; Miss Gayle Hunnicutt, actress, 55; Prof. Glynn Huntly Johnson, political scientist, 69; Mr Patrick McInroe, actor, 76; Mr George Mudie MP, Treasurer of His Household, 52; Mr Dennis Norden, writer and broadcaster, 76; Mr Manuel Orantes, tennis player, 49; Ronald Reagan, former US president, 87; Mr Tom Richardson, ambassador to Italy, 57; Mr Mark Sheldon, former President, Law Society of England and Wales, 67; Mr Brian Simpson, MEP, 45; Mr Jimi Tarbuck, comedian, 58; Mr Fred Thesiger, cricketer, 67; Mr Keith Waterhouse, writer, 69; Kevin Whately, actor, 47.

Anniversaries

Births: Christopher Marlowe, playwright, 1564; Sir Henry Irving (John Wright), 1838; Henry Brodribb, actor, 1838; Francois Truffaut, film director, 1932. Deaths: Lancelot "Capability" Brown, landscape gardener, 1783.

Carlo Goldoni, playwright, 1793; Charles Langbridge Morgan, author, 1958. On this day: Great Britain and Maori chiefs signed the Treaty of Waitangi in New Zealand, 1840; an Act of Parliament granted votes for women over 30, 1918; Queen Elizabeth II succeeded in the throne, 1952; seven members of the Manchester United football team were among 21 killed in an air crash at Munich, 1958. Today is the National Day of New Zealand and the Feast Day of St Amand, St Guarinus of Palestina, St Hildegard, Saints Mel and Melchus, St Paul Miki and his Companions and St Vedast or Vast.

Lectures

Victoria and Albert Museum: Kate McClelland, "Surrealist Furniture", 2.30pm.

Gresham College (Barnard's Inn Hall, London EC1): Professor Colin Pillinger, "Sojourning and Surveying on Mars", 1pm.

Synagogue services

Details of synagogue services to be held tomorrow may be obtained by telephoning the following: Sabbath begins in London at 4.45pm.

United Synagogues: 081-341 8999. Federation of Synagogues: 0181-202 2265. Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues: 071-530 1623. Reform Synagogue of Great Britain: 0181-549 4731. Spanish and Portuguese Jews Congregation: 071-2573. New London Synagogue (Finsbury): 071-328 1024.

LAW REPORT: 6 FEBRUARY 1998

Lockable folding pocket knife is a bladed article

A folding pocket knife which was capable of being locked open was a bladed article for the purposes of section 139 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988.

Regina v Deegan: Court of Appeal (Criminal Division) (Lord Justice Waller, Mr Justice Owen and Mr Justice Sullivan) 4 February 1998

The Court of Appeal dismissed the appeal of Desmond Garcia Deegan against his conviction at Harrow Crown Court on his plea of guilty, following a ruling by the judge, to possessing a bladed article in a public place contrary to section 139 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988.

The appellant had been stopped by police officers and had been found to be in possession of a pocket knife which was capable of being opened and locked into an open posi-

tion, and equally capable of being folded once the mechanism had been operated to unlock the blade. He was charged with an offence under section 139 of the Act, and originally pleaded not guilty. He changed his plea, however, after the judge had ruled that he was bound by two decisions of the Divisional Court, namely *Harris v DPP and Fehmi v DPP* (1993) 96 Cr App R 235, and that the interpretation placed on a bladed article those cases applied to the bladed article found in the appellant's possession.

The judge discharged the appellant absolutely, and certified that the matter was fit for appeal.

Benjamin Hargreaves (Registrar of Criminal Appeals) for the appellant; Ian Lees (Crown Prosecution Service) for the Crown.

Lord Justice Waller said that section 139 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 provided:

(1) ... any person who has an article to which this section applies within a public place shall be guilty of an offence.

(2) Subject to section 139 below, this section applies to any article which has a blade or is sharply pointed except a folding pocket knife.

(3) This section applies to a folding pocket knife if the cutting edge of its blade exceeds three inches.

The Divisional Court had held in *Harris v DPP and Fehmi v DPP* that to be a "folding pocket knife" the blade had to be readily and immediately foldable at all times simply by the folding process. A knife which on opening automatically locked and could not be folded until a button had been pressed was not a "folding pocket knife".

Counsel for the appellant had sought to persuade the

court that the conditions of *Pepper v Hart* [1993] AC 593 were applicable so as to make admissible ministerial statements made whilst the Bill which ultimately became the Criminal Justice Act 1988 was being debated in Parliament, and that the court should accordingly look at certain passages in *Harris*, which, he submitted, clearly showed that the type of knife carried by the appellant was intended to be excluded from the section.

Without objection from the Crown the court had examined the material from *Harris* de bene esse. However, it was important to establish whether the conditions in *Pepper v Hart* had been complied with so as to make the material admissible. One of those conditions was that the ministerial statements relied upon were clear.

Although in one sense the statements the court had examined were clear, in that the ministers had clearly thought that they were excluding from section 139 not just pocket knives which fitted the Divisional Court's interpretation of "folding", but some which "locked" when open, they were not clear in the sense required by *Pepper v Hart*. That was because "locking pocket knives" was itself an ambiguous phrase.

In those circumstances the conditions of *Pepper v Hart* had not been fulfilled, and it was not legitimate for the court to take the ministerial statements into account. Furthermore, to construe the phrase "folding pocket knife" differently from the way in which the Divisional Court had construed it would be impermissible.

— Kate O'Hanlon, Barrister



Dennis Selinger

Dennis Selinger, theatrical agent; born Black Rock, Brighton 20 July 1921; married 1968 Debra Winchester (marriage dissolved 1997); died London 2 February 1998.

In the often maligned world of theatrical agents who avidly seek work for their clients in return for a percentage, Dennis Selinger was unusual for the respect and warmth with which he was regarded. He rose from a humble start to become a super-agent with one of the most powerful show-business agencies, and many of his clients (who included Michael Caine, Peter Sellers and David Niven) became close friends.

Born in Black Rock, Brighton, in 1921, Selinger was the youngest of four children, and since his parents were elderly his older sister became a surrogate mother to him. When she married the theatrical agent Monty Lyon, Selinger became attracted to the idea of pursuing a similar career and at the age of 16 found work for his first client, a fan dancer in the East End who, according to Selinger, championed him to step into the role when Moore departed.)

When Faye Dunaway's career was in the doldrums and she was parting from her husband Terry O'Neill she turned to Selinger for guidance and within two years her career had revived. The legendary comics Charles Chaplin, Harold Lloyd, Laurel and Hardy were all managed by Selinger when they were in England.

When the large agency

CMA metamorphosed into ICM (International Creative Management), Selinger took charge of their film-star roster. Among the leading Americans he represented in this country were Marlon Brando, Barbra Streisand and Bette Davis.

He would recount that when he first met Davis she was holding forth in the studio canteen, and when interrupted to be introduced to her, she opened her eyes wide, looked him up and down and said, "Yes fine, he'll be great for the part."

A bachelor for most of his life, Selinger in 1968 married the businesswoman Debra Winchester, who was parting from her husband Terry O'Neill she turned to Selinger for guidance and within two years her career had revived. "I was literally the girl next door," she said. Though they divorced 10 months ago, they remained close, Selinger continued working on behalf of clients from his hospital bed until a few days before his death.

— Tom Vallance



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When it comes to welfare, the special relationship offers a lesson in failure



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Glamour, foreign policy and ideology have always been the three ingredients of the special relationship between British and American governments. So it is with Mr Blair's trip to Washington. The glamour works both ways. The Prime Minister gets the red carpet treatment from the "most powerful man in the world" and huge US media coverage, some of which will be reflected back into our islands. While Bill Clinton gets a big endorsement from Mr Squeaky-Clean. No matter that Mr Blair would rather be thought "effective" than squeaky-clean. Or that most Americans have no idea that Mr Blair is a Christian moralist with a blameless private life: he is British, polite and easily captioned as the most successful centre-left politician of the democratic world.

The fact that the President is knee-deep in the trash of the affair of "Monica whatever-her-name-is", as the Prime Minister's official spokesman described her, means that the terms of trade in image are more

in Britain's favour than ever. Mr Blair can hardly be criticised for wanting to take full advantage of the situation, although so far his attempts to provide moral support for the President without commenting on the specific allegations have been rather un-gainly. But we are entitled to ask what the people of Britain are getting out of it.

For some, questioning the special relationship is simply absurd, reminiscent of the Monty Python sketch. "Yes, but, apart from saving our nation in two world wars and rebuilding Europe with Marshall Aid, what have the Americans ever done for us?" Surely, though, all alliances have to be judged afresh for each generation, as Mr Blair himself might put it.

So let us consider the other two aspects of the relationship. First, foreign policy. We should put aside the thought that missile-rattling against Saddam Hussein is a diversionary tactic aimed at American public opinion. Even if that were true, it would not invalidate military action against Iraq.

If it is justified in international law. And it should be said clearly and unhesitatingly that it is.

As the Prime Minister reminded the Commons on Wednesday, the Iraqi leader agreed at the UN to destroy all his chemical, biological and nuclear weapons of mass destruction. Since then, UN inspectors have found abundant evidence that he has failed to do so. Mr Blair is quite right to pledge this country's full support for the enforcement of UN resolutions. That is not slavishly following Washington's line: it would be required by any foreign policy calling itself "ethical", and it is the French and the Russians who should be criticised for trying to undermine the rule of law.

There is no need for a special relationship here. However, simply stopping Saddam from developing weapons of mass destruction will not bring a just and lasting settlement in Iraq. That requires a wider accommodation between the

Arab countries and the West, and Israel. Where the British government has been too reluctant to criticise America is on its policy towards Israel. If UN resolutions should be enforced pitilessly against Iraq, so they should be against Israel, and Mr Blair should tell Mr Clinton so.

The most potentially valuable strand of the special relationship, then, is the ideological one. Just as Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan lent support to each other's domestic policies, Mr Blair and Mr Clinton claim to have learnt from each other on welfare reform, social inclusion, schools and labour market policy. Today, Mr Blair's best minds meet All the President's Works for a "freewheeling" discussion. They intend to carry on thrashing out the nitty-gritty of the so-called "third way" between Reagan-Thatcher capitalism and state socialism.

Good luck to them. But do not expect The Answer to be issued on tablets of stone at the news conference afterwards. The

truth is that the promise of Clintonism, which won the presidency in 1992 and inspired Mr Blair's dash for the Labour leadership on a platform of social moralism, has not yet been realised in the US. "Welfare as we know it" has not been ended, and the "Wisconsin model" for getting people off welfare and into work has only just started. The fact is that, after five years, Mr Clinton's side of the table has surprisingly little concrete to offer Mr Blair's. The President's State of the Union address last week would have been good at the start of an administration, but not towards its end. No wonder both leaders say they are worried that their joint "project" will be seen more as soundbite than substance.

Let us hope that, behind the niceties, Mr Blair and his party are learning the real lessons - of the relative failure of the New Democrat project. As with many human relationships, the special relationship needs a healthy dose of hypocrisy and mutual scepticism to succeed.

LETTERS

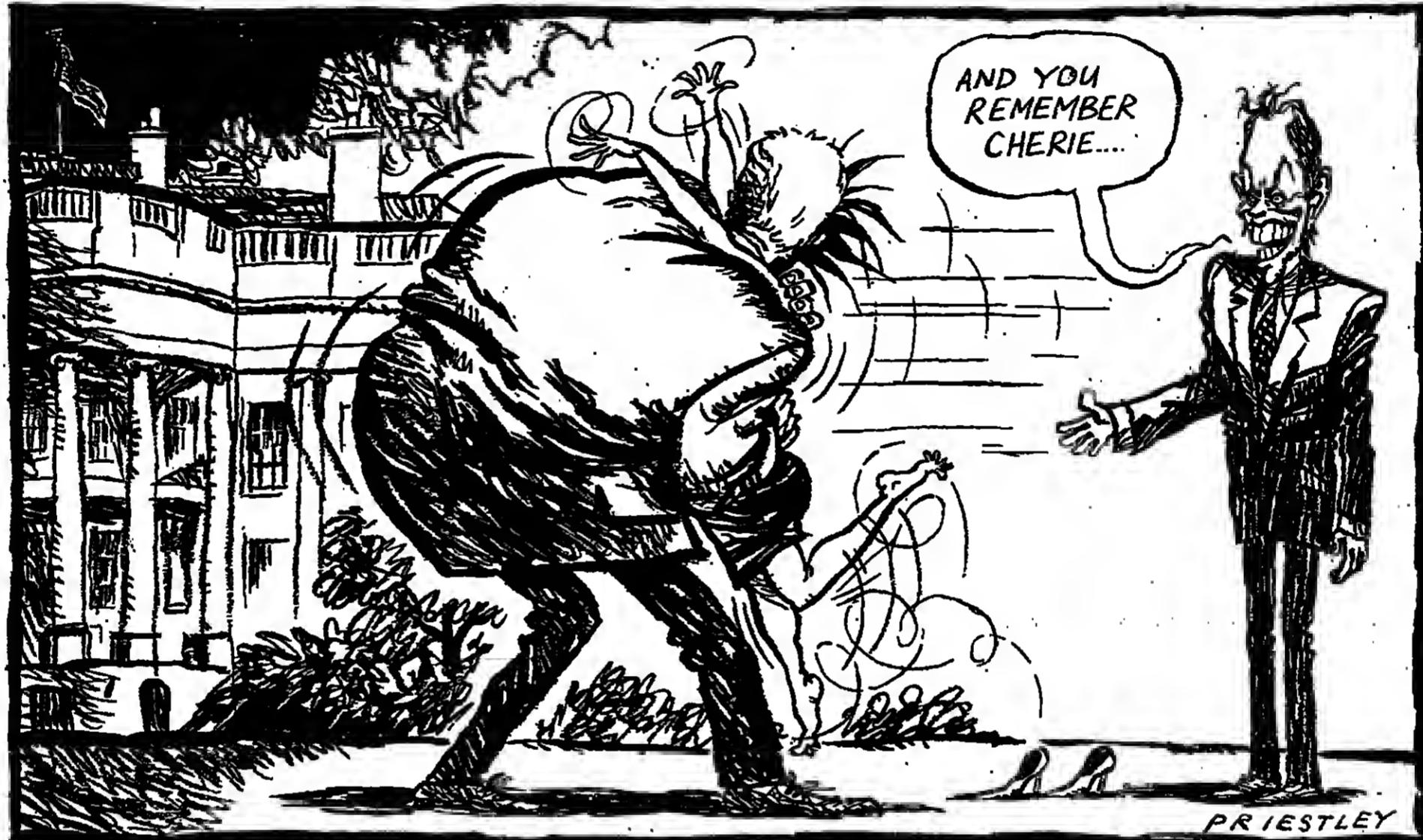
Saville inquiry

If Lord Saville of Newdigate's inquiry into the killings in Derry on 30 January 1972 is to have a less implausible outcome than the late Lord Widgery's, he and his colleagues must be given, and be seen to be given, access to all pertinent testimonies. This is a matter in which the British culture of traditional secrecy is inapplicable.

It is reported that official British medical records concerning the persons killed and wounded on Bloody Sunday are being withheld from the public until the year 2047 ("Military accused of lying to 1972 inquiry", 30 January). The bans on publication of the records must be lifted at once, so that quotations may be made in the published report upon the inquiry.

Witnesses will also wish to read them before being summoned to the public hearings. Unless the documents are released for consultation, there is a danger that the objectivity of the inquiry will be called into question before it has even begun.

GEORGE HUXLEY
Trinity College, Dublin
The writer was a Member of the Executive, Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association 1971-72



Bombs won't work

Bombing Iraq would be ineffective in forcing Iraqi compliance, as it would serve to increase Saddam Hussein's support amongst Iraqi people ("Cook flies to the gulf", 4 February).

By 1993, according to Unicef, the economic sanctions imposed on the country had caused at least 100,000 child deaths from malnutrition, vaccine-preventable diseases and contaminated water supplies. Combined with civilian casualties in the Gulf War and the two cruise missile attacks which have taken place since then, it is easy to spread the perception that the West is interested in harming the general population of Iraq rather than its brutal leadership.

To the small extent that the Iraqi government needs the support of the people, Saddam Hussein would be pleased to take any opportunity to portray himself as standing up to outside pressure: Britain and the United States are trapped, one fears, into a narrow and un-

pleasant range of options because they have a narrow and unpleasant agenda - the replacement of Saddam Hussein with an equally totalitarian, but obedient, leader.

MARK WALMSLEY
Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire

What's the big idea?

Hamish McRae argues ("Bill or Tony: which one will history remember?", 4 February) that neither Bill Clinton nor Tony Blair has yet developed the "big idea" which was so distinguishing a feature of Margaret Thatcher's administration.

However, he concedes that a possible idea is now emerging based on altering people's perception as to their own enhanced responsibilities with the state, in effect, acting as an enabler rather than a provider.

The prognosis sounds very much like the Communarianism associated with the American philosopher Amitai

Etzioni, with its moral rhetoric of rights and duties. This is all very well, as far as it goes, but the problem is that the contours of state and society are so much determined by the market today that it is difficult to see how broader structural inequalities can be tackled with this type of solution.

For example, the contingent or part-time workforce in the United States (on 1983 figures) is 25 per cent of the total and fast rising - for many this means a life of insecurity, poor pay and prospects with few benefits. The UK is following a similar trajectory. The big idea, if one exists, is to transform the plight of the bottom one-third so that they can share in the prosperity of the majority. I have read or heard little from either leader which gives grounds for optimism.

RICHARD DE ZOYA
Division of Politics
South Bank University
London SE1

Merit from mergers

It must be very difficult for the directors of Glaxo Wellcome and SmithKline Beecham to decide on the merits or otherwise of their merger when they have such a strong financial interest in its going ahead (Business Outlook, 3 February). The advisers, who are reported to be likely to receive £400m for their contribution to an agreed merger (I would be happy to do this myself, for rather less), also have a considerable incentive, which in many other spheres would raise questions about the quality of their advice.

May I suggest to the directors that they could easily persuade the public of their objectivity by committing the profit from share options arising from the merger (rather than from their good stewardship of the company) to charity, or to the redundancy fund for those members of their staff whose departure will be the prime cause of the added

value of the joint company? This would be analogous to the building society which makes it a requirement of new members that they similarly donate windfall bonuses. On a rather different scale, of course.

MICHAEL SHOESMITH
Lydbury North, Shropshire

The case for legal aid

Martin McKenna perpetuates the myth that civil legal aid for compensation claims is granted to undeserving cases (report, 4 February).

I am a partner in a legal aid practice. It is very difficult to obtain legal aid for a client who has a fighting chance. It is easier to obtain legal aid for a client who is almost certain to win. Unless a client has more than a 75 per cent chance of winning, we will not get legal aid.

Further, Mr McKenna perpetuates the myth that businesses end up paying for the legal advice they receive in defending claims. Most business

es have legal expenses insurance and if they do not, then they ought to obtain it.

Claims for personal injury, according to the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers, cost the Legal Aid Fund about £55,213,348 and the Government receives from the compensator (usually an insurance company) about £67m in repayment of benefits received by the injured party as a result of the injuries suffered. Civil legal aid spent on personal injury cases is therefore money well spent. The total amount of compensation recovered in 1995/96 was £518,584,482 and most of this will have been paid by insurers.

The Lord Chancellor, the Home Secretary and their ministers are attacking legal aid and those lawyers who work within its confines without producing any real evidence that legal aid is abused by applicants or lawyers.

A M ROBINSON
Pearson Caulfield Solicitors
Newcastle upon Tyne
London SW7

Bigoted musicians

It was predictable a few diehard atomists would come out of the woodwork and misconstrue my speech to the World Economic Forum as an attack on them (letters, 4 and 5 February). Yet I specifically said that "I do not necessarily criticise that style". What I did criticise was the arrogant attitude, exemplified by Martin Parker, that it is only acceptable to write contemporary classical music in one style.

That bigoted, narrow-minded approach was a primary cause of Western classical music's current malaise.

I fail to understand how Mr Parker can interpret my pleas for greater media coverage of gimmick-free classical music and for more concert reviews in quality newspapers as "anti-culture". And, by the way, what does he mean by "contemporary art music"?

JULIAN LLOYD WEBBER
London SW7

Abolish the lottery

"We told you so" is always an irritating comment, but it remains the fact that, three years ago, many in the churches warned that the National Lottery was an inherently sleazy licence to print money. A corruption scandal ended the previous national lottery 170 years ago, after a run of about a century. It now appears its successor was tainted from the very beginning ("Call for investigation into Camelot's lottery licence", 5 February).

Given the lamentable track record, surely the time has come not to reform this charity-robbing tax on the poor, but to abolish it?

THE REV PETER HATTON
Droitwich, Worcestershire

Recaptured by the Pirates, and surrendering again to the other forgotten lures of youth



MILES
KINGTON

Looking back to my teens, I realise that adolescence wasn't just a time for experimenting. It was a time for giving up, as well.

I think I probably abandoned more practices in my teens than I ever adopted or persevered with, or indeed that I have abandoned since. For instance, before I reached the age of 19 or 20 I had already stopped writing poetry, playing rugby, playing the trombone, trying to learn Welsh, taking bagpipe lessons, doing the high jump, attempting to master ballroom dancing, having homosexual leanings, and reading Agatha Christie and Dennis Wheatley. I haven't done any of them since, not once. Occasionally I regret not having learned Welsh, and when I was 19 I used to feel sorry I had managed to read all Agatha Christie's books without leaving any to look forward to (but then I discovered Raymond Chandler), despite which I go through life on the whole without a back-

ward glance to that far-off, oddly assort-ed collection of enthusiasms.

However, the other day I did go back. Not to any of the above practices, but to something I thought had been eradicated by over-exposure in my teens - to an evening of Gilbert and Sullivan. My parents sent me to the kind of school that liked to put on Gilbert and Sullivan productions because they were safe and not too difficult and sedentary and full of opportunities for musicians and performers and carpenters and so I found myself from time to time playing bit parts in *The Mikado*, and *HMS Pinafore*, and lots more. And because Gilbert wrote very good jokes and Sullivan wrote very good tunes, I enjoyed it and it all stuck in my mind somewhere, like a deserted pool in the woods, no longer visited but all still there.

I never thought of going to see a Gilbert and Sullivan opera when I grew up,

partly because I had grown up, partly because it was the sort of thing it was more fun to do yourself than see someone else doing, and partly because my experience at school taught me that if you saw G & S done by complete strangers, it wasn't half as good as when you knew everyone in the cast. I had been taken occasionally to see D'Oyly Carte productions, which were done from the waist up and down, and had once seen a film of *HMS Pinafore* ... done by Americans which was such an awful coat that, mentally, I walked out of it.

(Interestingly, the Americans are often nuts about Gilbert and Sullivan. I have never worked out why. Is there any other nation in the world that even knows about G & S? Have the French come to terms with them yet? The Germans ...?)

And then this week the Theatre Royal,

Bath, was home for a week to *The Pirates of Penzance* done by the West Yorkshire

Pirate House. I knew about the WYP. They were, apparently, wonderful. Their productions were often reviewed in places like

Kaleidoscope, and always raptly, and put on in Leeds, which I couldn't get to. They probably had done a good job on *The Pirates of Penzance*. I then discovered that neither my wife nor my son had ever seen any G & S, so off we went tentatively and fearfully on Monday, and I have to report that everyone thought it was terrific. Much better than I remember it from my teens.

This was partly because the material itself stood up quite well, like a mature if slightly staid pantomime, but mostly because the production took liberties which D'Oyly Carte would never have dreamt of, without sabotaging it. Wherever things were a bit staid or slow, they camped it up a bit - the policemen, especially, were gloriously over the top led by a wonderfully rubbery Sergeant (Stephen Matthews), the

Pirate King (Jeremy Harrison) managed to be funny as well as tremendously dashing, while hero Frederic was terribly tall and handsome, and had a lovely voice ...

I looked up Frederic in the programme to see who he was played by, and found it was an actor called Mark Umbers, of whom his programme biographical note said: "The Pirates of Penzance is Mark's first professional theatre work." Blimey. If that was his first job, apart from one or two bits on TV, he's going to go far ...

Well, in years to come I'll look back at this moment as the start of my second childhood. The moment when I started reverting to lost pleasures? Is that an Agatha Christie novel I see before me? Will I have another bash at the bagpipes? Or the waltz?

Well, of course not. The idea is quite ludicrous. But then, so was the idea of giving Gilbert and Sullivan another go.

I had better watch myself.

هذا من الأصل

هذا من الأصل

We must trust the judges to wield the blue pencil



DAVID AARONOVITCH
PRIVACY AND PREJUDICE

Lord Irvine of Lairg, the Lord Chancellor, is a man so imposing that one might easily believe that his enormous wig of office is, in reality, his own hair. And the voice that emerges from beneath that wig is no less impressive, possessing the fruity resonance of a great actor – Sir Donald Sinden perhaps – reading passages from the Old Testament to an audience of ladies in a large oak-panelled room. He is also, of course, both mentor to, and confidante of, the Prime Minister. It is hardly surprising then, that when this voice utters, the utterances are treated as lapidary. One by one they are mentally incised by his listeners on imaginary tablets of stone.

It is therefore difficult for such a man to engage in speculation without the world becoming convinced that legislation follows close behind. So when Lord Irvine took Ian Hargreaves – the editor of the *New Statesman* – upstairs to see his new wallpaper, and spoke about a range of subjects, one of which was the press and privacy, it was only to be expected that his amiably casual replies to the questions he was asked should have been subsequently invested with an almost immediate intention. The Lord Chancellor's "privacy plans" were giving rise, we were told yesterday morning, to "censorship fears".

Journalists' paranoia has been fuelled this week by two reminders of the willingness of MPs to speak foolishness in relation to what is printed or broadcast. Brian Walden's ungenerous comments about Nelson Mandela led more than 50 MPs – mostly Labour – to condemn his "disgraceful and jaundiced attack" on the South African leader. Their inference appeared to be that Mr Walden's words should not have been transmitted. Yet, as Boyd Tonkin's article on this page shows, his thesis is properly a matter for argument over censorship. The same applies to Kevin McNamara, a Catholic MP for Hull, who seemed to suggest that a television programme featuring the cooking and eating of a placenta should be banned because it amounted to support for cannibalism.

Yet the Lord Chancellor was not being foolish or threatening, but merely engaging in a civilised discussion with Mr Hargreaves about how to deal with what might be called the Great Collision – the difficult meeting between the right of the individual to privacy and the right of the same individual to freedom of expression. And what lends urgency to this discussion is the forthcoming enactment of the Human Rights Bill (essentially the incorporation into British law of the European Convention on Human Rights – stay awake at the back of the class). Pretty soon after the bill becomes law, our judges will

begin to establish case law on privacy. Enter prior restraint (which, disappointingly, is not something that libidinous monks are put in to keep them pure). People seeking to defend their privacy against public encroachment are unlikely to wait until after stories about them are printed, to gain redress. The horse of their privacy will long have bolted. So, at first whiff that a story is being prepared, they will want to injunct the organisation concerned from printing it. When (to take the example discussed between Irvine and Hargreaves) Robin Cook realised that he was being photographed at dawn, putting out the rubbish near a flat containing someone who was not his wife, he might have sought an injunction against the *News of the World* preventing publication. It would attempt to prevent the injunction by showing that publication was, in some way, in the public interest.

Those who fear censorship of any kind are tremendously exercised by prior restraint. They see it being deployed to thwart legitimate enquiry, forcing journalists halfway into an investigation to show their hands to the villain being investigated. The vast wrath of Robert Maxwell is always invoked here, to float like a poison cloud above the argument (though Maxwell, of course, achieved exactly the same ends through a bullying use of our absurd libel laws). But the problem is that prior restraint in some form must happen. It is sod-all use having a right to privacy if you can only act once the damage has been done. Like virginity, once privacy has been lost it cannot be regained. That is what our judges are bound to say, and what European judges would also rule. The only real question therefore, is who will do the restraining – the courts or some other body charged with the responsibility?

And it was here that Lord Irvine came up with his little bit of speculation. Might not the Press Complaints Commission, an expert body composed of newspaper editors and industry grandees, take upon itself the role of judging when a story was in the public interest, and when it was not? Could it not, in addition to imposing fines, create some mechanism for prior restraint?

One of Britain's more far-sighted editors quickly seized upon the Lord Chancellor's words. Faced with the choice between a crusty old establishment figure in scurvy ruling on the public interest and the job being done by fellows from the industry, he would far rather have the latter, thank you very much. It would be better for journalism.

Yes, but would it be better for the rest of you? Certainly. Judging by recent events, the PCC is – to say the least – an inadequate guarantor of the rights of anyone except the occasional young prince, and the newspaper editors who themselves dominate it. Consider the cases of Piers Morgan, of Jack Straw and – most disgracefully – of the Tory shadow minister whose daughter was "outed" last weekend as a prostitute. All clearly outside the public interest remit, all printed without any reaction from Lord Wakeham, chairman of the PCC. At the same time, marvel at the gentleman's agreement that has led to the absence of any stories – despite their prominence as public figures – about the private lives of newspaper editors and proprietors, some of whose activities make the Borgias look chintzy. If ever there was a prior restraint, this is it.

It may be because I do not know many judges, or because I do know too many proprietors and editors, but if I were you, dear reader, I would want the judges to judge.

Mandela fits the job description for a hero in the modern world



BOYD TONKIN
THE WRITING OF HISTORY

In the climactic scene of Steven Spielberg's new blockbuster *Amidst*, the grizzled patriarch John Quincy Adams – played with a tear-jerking twinkle by Anthony Hopkins – scans the bench of judges in the US Supreme Court. He paces up and down beside the busts of his nation's Founding Fathers, and then points to "the only living hero" in the room. This is Cinque, the West African captive who has led a revolt aboard a Spanish slaving schooner. Would Brian Walden, who has just scorned Nelson Mandela for his feeble use of force in a later struggle against racial tyranny, count Cinque as a hero? Since the film begins with the captives gorily skewering the ship's crew with cutlasses, perhaps the chief rebel of the *Amidst* would live up to Walden's bloodthirsty standards.

Walden argued in his off-the-cuff television lectures that modern values have discredited heroism in the classic mould. Hollywood, as ever, disagrees. Following the movie's golden rule of "make it simple, make it personal", Spielberg transforms the legalistic wrangles of the real *Amidst* case into a sort of cross-cultural romance between two exemplars of courage and nobility: the Yankee lawyer Adams and the African farmer Cinque. Popular art loves heroes as much as it ever did, as anyone driven mad by those endless car ads in which M People cheerfully advise us to search for one inside ourselves will know. And – as Spielberg's previous portrait of Oskar Schindler shows – the concept can embrace an inner battle against doubt and weakness without losing its lustre.

Yet the features of the favoured modern hero have changed, and Walden sounded most anachronistic in his stress on the conflict-seeking boldness of a Lincoln in 1861, a Churchill in 1940 (or he might argue) a Thatcher in 1982. As Mandela's reputation proves, we now admire the courage of



A man for all cultures: Nelson Mandela has the courage of reconciliation

Glyn Griffiths

reconciliation more than the courage of confrontation. And, on the forgiveness front, the South African president certainly trumps every contemporary rival. This, after all, is the ex-prisoner who extended a lunch invitation to Percy Yutar, the prosecutor who demanded his death at the Rivonia trial.

He even described P W Botha, who licensed the secret service to kill Mandela's comrades, as "a first-class gentleman". Many ANC veterans might have chosen a phrase such as "murdering swine".

Mandela stands at the summit of modern heroism because complex societies grasp that they have, above all, to learn to live with deep internal differences. In contrast to the melting-pot optimism of previous decades, they now agree with the late Isabell Berlin that deep-dyed cultural divisions will not fade or blur. Shortly before his death, Berlin even modified his lifelong Zionism to accept the case for a Palestinian state. In the generation before Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi had insisted that "An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind". We know too well that the alternative can look like Bosnia or (closer to home) Belfast.

Yet the quest for peace still implies that power lies in the hero's magnanimous hands. Walden's scepticism about heroism today also takes its cue from a hundred years of deterministic thought that down-grades individual will. For most

of this century, every half-bright schoolchild with an up-to-date teacher has imbibed a sophisticated scorn for the "Great Man" theory of history.

This contempt has come from many points on the intellectual compass. Ootright Marxists and softer social theorists argued that grain-prize cycles and even climate change can account for the past better than the whims of monarchs and generals.

Forget Cromwell's force or Charles's folly as an origin of civil war; look instead at the gentry's ascent – or the gentry's decline; at a breakdown in the civil service – or a revival in the civil service.

Much of this anti-hero history has been highly persuasive. Read Ferdinand Braudel's wonderful panorama of the Mediterranean world in the age of Philip II, and you can easily believe that Drake could have stayed on Plymouth Hoe and finished his game of bowls. The Armada would have collapsed under the weight of its own contradictions anyway. And there was a time when smart kids knew you could win high marks by attributing almost every major event to that sacred mantra, "the rise of the middle class".

Other modern forms of destiny have denied the hero freedom and impact. Descending from the cheap debunking of Lytton Strachey's *Eminent Victorians*, a kind of cut-price Freudianism kept its reductive focus on the historical actor.

But it now places his or her role within the iron cage of early trauma. As the Irish poet George Russell wrote at the dawn of the pop-Freudian era, "In the lost boyhood of Judas/Jesus was betrayed".

In recent years, bumptious psychoanalysis has taken knocks almost as hard as those meted out to vulgar Marxism. Yet just as these two related tides of junk determinism have receded, another has raced up: new-wave Social Darwinism, the latest fad of intellectual fashion-victims. Expect, in the coming years, a slew of specious books that will try to stretch the great movements of human history on the Procrustean bed of Natural Selection.

Yet, just as Walden adds his unscripted half-tours to the conviction that the heroic age is past, the tide of historical thought is on the turn. Plenty of cutting-edge historians now accept that personalities – heroes, villains, fixers or chancers – can mould or change events. The most recent explanations of the outbreak of the British civil war in 1642 find its roots in particular conflicts and decisions of the two or three preceding years. To all but fatalists, Hitler's virtual coup d'état in January 1933 (as Nazi supporters) now looks desperately, tragically avoidable. On the

home turf of Marxism itself, no serious historian denies that Lenin and Trotsky made an irreplaceable difference to what happened in Russia in 1917. Paradoxically, the transformation of the Bolsheviks from minor sect to ruling élite owed everything to personal initiative and almost nothing to vast subterranean forces. (Marx, of course, expected the Revolution in England first.) Perhaps, at some level, the loved or loathed example of Lady Thatcher during the 1980s has played a rôle in re-instating will and choice to British historical writing.

Still, if it's ruthlessness that Walden seeks, he missed the finest living candidate. General Vo Nguyen Giap first helped drive the Japanese from Vietnam, then, in charge of the Viet Cong, he saw off the United States. If strategic genius, utter determination and a willingness to shed the blood of countless thousands define heroism, Giap's your man. Yet Vietnam's tormented history brings to mind the close of Galileo, by the deeply unheroic Bertolt Brecht. "Unhappy the land that has no heroes," laments the broken scientist's assistant. "No," replies Galileo. "Unhappy the land that has a need for heroes."

A Tory backbencher offers his leader a ladder to climb down



DONALD MACINTYRE
COMMON SENSE
ON THE EURO

From deep in the interstices of the Conservative party, a still small voice of sanity. In theory Tory backbenchers are, by quite a long way, the most insignificant life form, after May 1997, in the Westminster eco-system. Yet by a cruel irony the same election that made them irrelevant delivered a new intake of Tory MPs who made up in quality quite a lot of what they woefully lacked in quantity. More of them than usual had good brains and quite a few had knocked about in proper jobs before going into parliament. One of these, Andrew Tyrie, an economist who had worked for the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development and had been an exceedingly bright if spiky adviser to three suc-

cessive Chancellors – Nigel Lawson, John Major and Norman Lamont – has just lit a slow and as yet scarcely perceptible fuse that may yet detonate the controlled explosion needed to avert his party's self-destruction.

The commitment to rule out EMU for two parliaments was always a piece of electoral sado-masochism. Its purpose was to "lance the boil" of Europe, as William Hague put it, and unite the party. But while it did unite a critical mass of the party – with the important, and still threatening exception of the famous pro-Europeans who gather under the banner of Kenneth Clarke – this was at the expense of its connection with an electorate all too capable of seeing this policy has the peculiar flaw of being neither principled nor pragmatic.

If the party was against it in principle why rule it out for only ten years? If it wanted to wait and see how EMU worked, why fix an arbitrary timetable?

Tyrie's message is contained in a densely argued pamphlet for the European Policy Forum; but it is, in essence, devastatingly simple: that the portentous political arguments both for and against EMU have been grossly overcooked; that so far from being an irreversible sacrifice of sovereignty, it is no more so than others already made in Nato, Europe and the UN by Britain;

that contrary to received wisdom, it is reversible as previous currency unions have been (there would be no "panzers" ... rolling through the Channel Tunnel) if Britain decided to withdraw (one in), and that it might have economic advantages which couldn't be ignored. Finally, and most importantly, he suggests that the sensible stance would be to wait and see whether EMU can stand the critical test of surviving a recession – a policy, in short, both pragmatic and principled.

But what makes the pamphlet so interesting, more even than what it says, is where it comes from. Kenneth Clarke was similarly warning his party to drop its EMU policy in a *New Statesman* interview this week. But Tyrie's is a new voice. Unlike Clarke he isn't at all part of the left-of-centre, Europhile cadre of the Tory party. He is at best agnostic about whether EMU will be successful. All three of his former bosses – and he was especially close to Lawson – are now anti-EMU. He is probably more of a natural ideological soulmate to Peter Lilley than to Chris Patten. He admits to being, since the collapse of the Berlin wall, "deeply sceptical of the benefits of the EU in its present form to Britain or continental Europe". But he is commendably incapable of understanding why a grown-up political party

should rule out in advance, and before it has to, a decision that might be both good for British prosperity and for its influence on the world. To do so, in his judgement, is not conceivable in the national interest.

But never mind the national interest. There are consequences in what Tyrie is saying for the naked self-interest of his party. If the single currency is a failure, the chances are that even a Labour government won't try to take us into it. But suppose EMU does turn out to be a success early in the next parliament and that Britain is in danger of being left out. Either the Conservative Party has to oppose something the British people may now want. Or it has to ignominiously to change its mind – in one of the most opportunist U-turns in modern political history – because it's going well. Wouldn't it be vastly better to follow the example set by ERM by Labour in opposition?

'Britain could leave EMU without panzers rolling through the Channel Tunnel'

Labour showed that by into it. But suppose EMU does turn out to be a success early in the next parliament and that Britain is in danger of being left out. Either the Conservative Party has to oppose something the British people may now want. Or it has to ignominiously to change its mind – in one of the most opportunist U-turns in modern political history – because it's going well. Wouldn't it be vastly better to follow the example set by ERM by Labour in opposition?

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OUTLOOK ON A LANDMARK FOR THE UK SOFTWARE GROUP, TELEPHONY PLANS OF BRITISH GAS, AND MONSOON COMING TO MARKET

If you haven't already heard of Misys, it's time to wake up. This is Britain's very own Microsoft. It may not yet be a household name, but its stock market value is £2.8bn, which means that when the committee that decides on these things sits down next month, it's likely that Misys will become the first information technology company to be granted a place in the FTSE 100 index.

True, joining the Footsie is a largely symbolic event. But nothing could more elegantly describe the changing face of the British economy. Misys - a company which is less than two decades old and joined the stock market as a £10m toddler 11 years ago - is now worth more than such stalwarts of British industry as British Steel and Blue Circle. The company that is most likely to drop out of the Footsie to make way for it is Sir Stanley Kalms' Dixons. Misys is no exception; thrusting rival software groups such as Sage, Sema and Logica are only a few steps behind.

So how has Misys done it? The answer is a combination of acquisitions and growing demand. One part of its growth was as a consolidator in the banking software market, hoovering up a number of small niche players and selling their products to banks around the world. At the same time, however, it has also had the benefit of expanding markets as banks have rushed to automate every conceivable aspect of their businesses.

Careful management of cash has been a hallmark, a technique Kevin Lomax the chairman, must have learnt at the feet of

his previous employer Lord Hanson. Then there's the following wind of a very generous share price rating. Misys shares have traded on a multiple of 38 times next year's forecast earnings.

Still, let's not get carried away. Viewed from the US, Misys and the rest of the British IT industry are small fry, dwarfed by Microsoft, Intel and a whole raft of companies you've never even heard of. To be a force in the global software industry, Misys is going to have to become many times larger. Even so this is something of a defining moment for the British stock market. At last, an IT company in the FTSE 100.

British Gas lines up for phone wars

Who'd want to be a telephone company? Well quite a lot actually. Despite advances in technology which industry executives say will eventually deliver free or near free voice telephony, there were more than 200 licensed telecom operators in the UK at the last count and rising. Now British Gas wants to add itself to this burgeoning list of competitors.

One way of looking at this is that it must be mad. Discounted telephony is now so common and the market place becoming so competitive that it is a wonder anyone makes money out of it at all any longer.

The newspapers have become full of special slashed priced offers. Enhanced

competition is only part of the story. New technology should in any case be causing the cost of voice telephony to plummet.

The internet already offers limitless video communication for only marginal cost. In the last few years voice communication over the internet has also become possible, though quality is still poor. At the same time, however, the technology used to transmit traffic across conventional networks has advanced to a level which makes it possible to deliver services for a tiny fraction of present costs. This is because of the almost limitless capacity of new networks for simultaneous transmission of voice and data.

The only thing that stops the price falling to virtually nothing immediately is that the world is still largely dominated by national monopolies with big overheads and a huge capital investment to recoup in an ageing infrastructure. As competition begins to bite that will change. These monopolies will have to start cannibalising their own customer base with new low cost telephony to survive.

For the moment there is not much sign of BT's profits suffering from all this. BT seems able to grow its volume and revenues at a pace which outstrips its fall in market share. But it cannot long remain thus. The basic business of transmitting voice and data will eventually become pure, low cost, utility stuff. Because of the ability of modern networks to offer limitless capacity, it may even have to sold at a loss. Telephone companies will make their money not out of the business of sell-

ing conventional telephony but out of value added services, and by persuading other product and service providers to sell their wares via the telephone.

In a curious way, all this helps explain why British Gas should want to enter this cut-throat business. Telephony will become just another string to its multi utility bow, and if the most valuable thing in business is knowledge of the customer, British Gas and its parent, Centrica, will have it in spades. Utility infrastructures and billing systems are set to become mere conduits for the sale of a huge range of other products and services.

Monsoon prompts worries on price

So it was second time lucky after all for Peter Simon, the founder of the Monsoon fashion chain. The former encyclopaedia salesman, who had to pull the group's float 18 months ago, has signed up a blue chip register of shareholders at the second attempt and got a top of the range price into the bargain. The Armani-clad retailer is now £83m richer and he still has three quarters of a business worth £352m.

Institutional investors seem to have bought the story, the question for private investors is whether they should do the same. This is a strong brand with a 12 year record of unbroken profit growth and a market position that seems immune to the volatile end of high fashion. But there are

concerns. The key worry is the price. At 198p Monsoon has been floated at a premium to the market and at a staggering three and half times sales. This leaves little margin for error. The second concern is Monsoon's margins, which at the gross level are a staggering 62.6 per cent. Not much scope for improvement there.

The final issue is the abandonment of the float in 1996 over the ultimate beneficiaries of a Maltese-registered trust which owned two thirds of the shares. Mr Simon said then that he was not a beneficiary. He later retracted that statement by saying there were certain circumstances under which he might have benefited.

Even though all this is now in the past, he still will not say how the trust was set up, who its beneficiaries were, or how he managed to buy out its interest. This trust has now been unwound and another trust administered on Mr Simon's behalf will control three quarters of the business after it floats. So Mr Simon can legitimately claim he's removed all remaining concerns. But if all this is now irrelevant, why is Mr Simon so reluctant to explain it?

Outside investors will find themselves a powerless minority in a company dominated by a founder entrepreneur. The history of such companies generally doesn't inspire confidence. This is not to denigrate Monsoon, which is a good business, or Mr Simon who created and developed it. It may well be that all these concerns prove groundless and that indeed the stock will soar. Even so there's enough risk there to justify extreme caution.

Misys set to be the first IT company in the FTSE 100

Misys, the fast-growing software group, is set to become the first British information technology company to join the FTSE 100 when the members of the index of leading shares are reviewed next month.

Peter Thal Larsen reports on how the City has warmed to the sector.

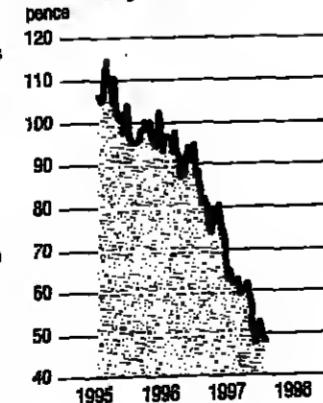
Shares in Misys have risen strongly in the past two months as investors have responded positively to the creation of a separate IT sector by the Stock Exchange.

Sale ends Sears' shoe empire

The rise and fall of Sears' shoe empire	
1891	John Sears sets up Trueform, making shoes
1953	Charles Clere buys Sears, Freeman, Hardy & Willis (FHW), Saxon, Curless
1957	Establishes British Shoe Corporation (BSC)
1988-89	Sears has 2,500 shops, with 25% of shoe market
1989	CEO Liam Strong decides to dispose of BSC after profits slump
Aug 95	Sells FHW, Trueform and Mansfield to Facis for £16m loss
Feb 96	Sells Saxon and Curless to Facis. Net loss: £30m
July 96	Facis stores return to Sears after going into administration
Aug 96	Sells Nash Puppy to Stylo. Net profit: £0.5m
Aug 97	Sells Saxon to Stylo for net loss of £2m
Sept 97	Liam Strong quits. David James takes over
Dec 97	Sells Doldi to Alexon. Net loss: £13m
Dec 97	Sells Show Express to Philip Green. Net loss: £65m
Dec 97	Sells Shoe City to Brentano. Net loss: £27m
Feb 98	Sells Cable & Co to Nine West for £0.8m profit.

David James

Share price



a better future for the group: "I've got rid of my losers. All I've got left now are winners." However, he admitted that some of the group's "winners" made insufficient profits.

Cable & Co has been acquired for £6m by Nine West, the US group which also bought its concessions business. The company now has 180 shoe stores and concessions in the UK. It also owns Pier 1 Terre and Shoe Studio. It plans to rebrand the 25 Cable & Co outlets under the Nine West name.

Sears' management has been criticised for being too slow to see changes in footwear fashion and for changing its retail formats too often. But Sir Bob said he looked forward to

formal entry into the FTSE 100. Misys' inclusion will be a symbolic moment for the British IT industry. The market has enjoyed explosive growth in the past 15 years as more and more companies have introduced information technology into their businesses. Demand has grown even faster in recent years as firms attempt to prepare their systems for the millennium and European monetary union.

However, many in the industry feel that the City has been slow to recognise the attractions of IT companies, and that this has starved them of funding and hampered their development. Until recently, British IT companies were valued less highly

than their US counterparts, prompting several groups to bypass the London market entirely and list on Nasdaq.

But Mr Lomax believes the City's aversion to hi-tech companies has eased. "The quality of research is improving and investors are getting better served," he said.

Formed in 1979, Misys floated on the Unlisted Securities Market in March 1987 at a share price of 95p and a market value of less than £10m. Eleven years on, the company is worth 280 times as much and its share price has seen a 26-fold increase.

The company started out selling software for the insurance industry, but most of its

growth has come from banking software. "We noticed that the software industry was very fragmented while the customers we were selling to were very large," said Mr Lomax.

Mr Lomax ascribed Misys' success to sticking closely to its business model and carefully controlling its cash flow, which it has used to fund acquisitions. Since joining the stock market, Misys has done roughly 30 deals, ranging from tiny software operations to last year's £54m acquisition of US healthcare software group Medic.

"Anybody who can grow a company that quickly deserves considerable praise," said industry analyst Richard Holway.

Outlook, this page

Dealing in the shares are expected to start next Wednesday. — Nigel Cope

German unemployment reaches post-war record

Germany's unemployment rate hit a new post-war record of 12.6 per cent last month, or 4.8 million people, but the increase from 11.8 per cent the previous month was due entirely to a seasonal rise in joblessness in construction. Adjusting for seasonal variations, unemployment fell by 72,000, its first decline for 10 months. However, economists did not see this as the start of an improving trend, and it will do nothing to alleviate the mounting political pressure on the government to take decisive action to cut unemployment. The Bundesbank left German interest rates unchanged yesterday.

Asian miracle 'not over'

A high-level meeting in London of officials from Asian and European countries ended yesterday with a fairly optimistic assessment of the fall-out from Asia's financial crisis. The concluding statement from the two-day meeting, preparing for the Asian and European heads of government summit in April, said the impact on Asia itself would be "material but manageable". Taking a longer-term view, according to Nigel Wicks, the senior Treasury official chairing the meeting, the Asian miracle had not ended.

Far East crisis hits Bass

Bass, the leisure giant, said that the economic crisis in the Far East had taken its toll on its hotel business. Revenues per available room fell 12 per cent in Asia in the first 16 weeks of its financial year. Sir Ian Prosser, the chairman, said fewer people were travelling within Asia. Bass said the group as a whole had traded in line with expectations. Bass shares closed down 2p at 942p.

KPMG merger inquiry

The planned \$1.8bn merger between the Big Six accounting and management consulting firms KPMG and Ernst & Young is to be subjected to a full investigation under the European Union's merger regulations. Both firms said they had expected the announcement, but were confident that the European Commission's stage-two inquiry would demonstrate that the deal to create the world's largest professional services firm should be allowed to go ahead. The Commission announced its investigation into the proposed merger between two other Big Six firms, Coopers & Lybrand and Price Waterhouse, last month.

Names fight NU on homes

Two hundred Lloyd's names will today issue a writ against Norwich Union in an effort to stop their homes being repossessed. Norwich Union is seeking to recoup the value of payments it has made to cover underwriting losses for the names. The names had bought policies from NU which allowed them temporarily to put off paying for losses while NU paid them. As security, NU had a charge against their homes. Geoffrey Hall, of the Norwich Union Action Group, will allege that NU concealed information it had about forthcoming losses when it sold the policies, between 1987 and 1992. NU declined to comment.

Monsoon comes to market at second attempt

Monsoon, the women's fashion retailer, has succeeded in its second attempt to float on the stock market. The group's advisers yesterday announced that the institutional placing had been over-subscribed at an offer price of 198p. This values the group at £352m.

There had been concerns that investors would shun the float because of the difficult retail climate and concerns about the group's high margins and growth plans. The group's unsuccessful attempt to come to the market in 1996 was also a concern for some. The float had to be pulled due to concerns

over the ultimate beneficiaries of a Maltese-based trust which owned the bulk of the shares. This time, the group's adviser, NatWest Markets, is said to have assembled a "blue-chip shareholder register".

However, some still expressed concerns over the pricing. "They are floating at three-and-a-half times turnover, which looks quite remarkable," said one senior fund manager who decided not to invest. Another, who also decided not to buy the shares, said: "It's a trade company. Fashion wax and wane and companies get it wrong. We weren't enticed by it."

The price gives the shares a forward p/e ratio of about 18. This is a slight discount to the retail sector but a premium to the market. SG Securities said the price left "no margin for error" and claimed a price of 150p would have been more realistic.

The float will net the Monsoon founder Peter Simon a windfall of £83m. Mr Simon and his family will still own 74.6 per cent of the company following the flotation. No money is being raised.

Deals in the shares are expected to start next Wednesday. — Nigel Cope

Outlook, this page

NEW INVESTMENT RATES			
Effective from 6 February 1998			
ANNUAL RATES		MONTHLY RATES	
Scarborough 120 & 120 By Post			
£50,000 - £250,000	7.70	6.16	
£25,000 - £49,999.99	7.65	5.98	
£10,000 - £24,999.99	7.50	5.90	
£1,000 - £2,499.99	7.40	5.82	
Scarborough 100 & 100 By Post			
£50,000 - £250,000	6.65	5.48	
£25,000 - £49,999.99	6.55	5.40	
£10,000 - £24,999.99	6.45	5.32	
£1,000 - £2,499.99	6.35	5.24	
Scarborough 75 & 75 By Post			
£25,000 - £250,000	5.00	4.00	
£10,000 - £24,999.99	4.95	3.95	
£1,000 - £2,499.99	4.85	3.85	
Scarborough 50 & 50 By Post*			
£25,000 - £250,000	4.25	3.48	
£10,000 - £24,999.99	4.20	3.40	
£1,000 - £2,499.99	4.15	3.32	
Scarborough 30 & 30 By Post*			</td

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY ANDREW YATES

Picture remains unclear for ICI

Imperial Chemical Industries has undergone such a year of transition that its 1997 results are of limited value either as a comparison with previous performance or as a yardstick for how well it may do in the future. Profits before tax and exceptional costs came in at £385 against £603m. This was towards the bottom end of the range but not wildly unexpected given the clobbering ICI took from exchange rates and its soaring interest bill. The strong pound wiped £190m off earnings while the acquisition of Unilever's specialty chemicals business helped debt levels to peak at £6.3bn, increasing the interest charge for the year from £89m to £251m.

The revolving door at 9, Millbank has seen £2.5bn worth of businesses sold off, a further £1.2bn of sales contracted and perhaps another £800m of disposals to come this year as ICI sheds its industrial chemicals image and concentrates on a portfolio of paints, flavours, fragrances and fine chemicals.

The result is a riot of continuing operations, discontinued operations, continuing operations to be discontinued, exceptions and goodwill write-offs. ICI's decision to squirrel away £440m of the £777m profit it made on disposals last year and use the money as provisions against losses expected on the upcoming sale of Tioxide and explosives means that the picture this year should look a lot clearer.

The combination of the Asian downturn, slowing world growth and unfavourable exchange rates will make for another tough year in 1998. But the good news is that ICI's exposure to the Far East has more than halved to 12 per cent of turnover following the sale of ICI Australia. Meanwhile, the exit from industrial chemicals will reduce currency exposure while the nature of the product range means that ICI manufactures much more of its output in local markets.

The 50 per cent jump in fourth quarter profits showed the contribution from the Unilever acquisition flowing through, particularly National Starch where operating margins are approaching 15 per cent. However, the task will be to achieve double-digit margins in the other businesses. Debt levels this year will fall to £6.6bn and perhaps lower, sharply reducing the in-

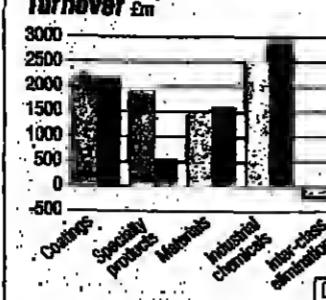
ICI: At a glance

Market value: £3.82bn, share price 978p

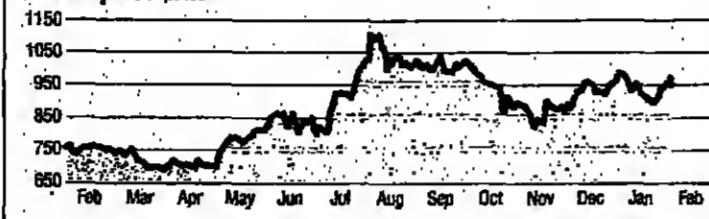
Trading record

	1995	1996	1997
Turnover (£m)	10.27	10.5	11.1
Profit before tax and exceptional (£m)	951	603	385
Earnings per share (p)	78.7	48.5	33.0
Dividends per share (p)	30	32	32

Turnover £m



Share price pence



terest bill while the clearout of underperforming bulk chemical rump should help earnings. The shares, up 39p to 978p, put ICI on a forward multiple of 18.5 times earnings supposing profits around the £600m mark this year. Still scope for buying.

A reminder of the biotech risks

If anybody was in any doubt that investing in biotech shares was as risky as roulette, yesterday's announcement from British Biotech was a timely reminder. Its share tumbled by 41p to 92p on news that the European launch of Zacutex, its treatment for acute pancreatitis, will be delayed for a year.

The news is hardly catastrophic for the group. After all Zacutex is far less important than marimastat, the potentially block-busting cancer drug, which British Biotech is pushing through clinical trials. And the delay

in marketing Zacutex will knock just £8m off analysts' profit forecasts for the year to April 1999, hardly enough to justify the £270m drop in the value of the group yesterday.

But biotech stocks are ruled by sentiment. It is hard to believe that less than two years ago British Biotech was valued at more than £2bn and vying for a place in the FTSE 100. Delays in product launches had a devastating effect on the share price; and the group is now valued at just £607m.

Problems at British Biotech have had a huge knock-on effect. Zacutex would have been the first treatment produced by a biotech company to reach the market and start producing a profit. A successful launch would have buoyed the whole sector, but the delay is a bitter pill to swallow and caused biotech shares to tumble again.

That said, nothing has really changed. If marimastat gets through clinical trials it could generate sales of £1bn; if it doesn't the shares will probably sink without trace. You pay your money and take your chance. As for the

rest of the sector, delays in Zacutex should have no impact on other companies' earnings prospects.

It seems the only sensible way to approach biotech shares is to spread the risk by buying a basket of international stocks.

Hardy's gas find lights the gloom

Hardy Oil & Gas lit up an otherwise gloomy sector yesterday with news of its bumper gas find in Pakistan. Investors, who have been watching share prices fall across the board as a result of the plunging oil price, reacted with predictable enthusiasm, pushing Hardy's share price up 37p, or almost 15 per cent, to 285p.

Is this rise justified? Well, perhaps. Hardy reckons its share of the field, which will fall to about 24 per cent once negotiations with the Pakistani government are completed, adds the equivalent of 40-80 million barrels of oil to its reserves. Even at the bottom end of the range, that's an increase of 24 per cent. Demand for the gas in Pakistan is strong, and long term there's even the possibility – politics permitting – of exporting it to India. Hardy should be able to finance the cost of developing the well without loading up its balance sheet with debt.

But oil exploration companies are valued as much by sentiment as by hard analysis. Because Hardy has managed one big find, investors will be more willing to bet on it repeating the trick. The other unanswered question is just how large a field Hardy is sitting on. Until it does more tests, no one will really be sure. But the chances are that the current estimates are conservative.

Of course, there are plenty of risks. The tests may prove to be bogus. The political sands could always shift against Hardy. But yesterday's share price move only begins to reverse six months of dramatic share price underperformance.

Investors will still remember the example of Cain Energy, which watched its share price rise almost sevenfold in 1996 on a series of oil discoveries in the same part of the world. The shares remain a punt, but at 285p the downside is probably protected while the potential upside is huge.

Halifax scraps charges for mortgage indemnities

Halifax, the retail bank, yesterday stopped charging customers for a highly controversial form of insurance which protects mortgage lenders from losing

money on repossession – at the expense of their customers. As Andrew Verity reports, it may force its rivals to follow suit.

Halifax now joins Cheltenham & Gloucester and Mortgage Express among the few who do not insist on the insurance.

Mortgage indemnity guarantees (MIGs), which are paid for by the customer but protect only the lender, added up to £1,020 to a mortgage worth £100,000 until yesterday. Now Halifax will charge customers nothing for loans below 90

per cent of the house value.

Financial advisers and consumer groups have become increasingly angry at the sale of MIGs. Lenders typically buy the product from just one insurer.

They also gain commission on its "sale" to the customer.

Alastair Conway, managing director of Clark Conway, an independent financial adviser, said: "Most buyers do not understand what MIGs are and are shocked when they discover the cost. People are also shocked to find they could still be chased for losses many years after losing their homes."

When repossession grew sharply in 1992, lenders frequently lost money as repossessed houses were sold at a loss. The greater risk caused MIG premiums to rise. With the housing market now bouncing back, advisers claim MIG premiums have failed to fall.

Mortgage protection has be-

come increasingly controversial both for lenders and the Government.

In a separate development, Liberal Democrat MPs have accused the Government of pushing people on income support into unnecessary mortgage arrears.

The Government last week admitted it based mortgage interest benefit on an interest rate used by the 30 biggest building societies. The Lib Dems said claimants were losing money because most lenders are now banks, charging higher interest.

The Government takes at least three months to change its rate of interest. It currently stands at 7.97 – against a market rate of 8.7.

Steven Webb, MP for Northavon, said: "I don't see why there shouldn't be a law saying as soon as official interest rates rise, so does the

benefit."

Cable group in £375m deal

Texas Utilities, the Dallas power

supplier considering a bid for Energy Group, yesterday pledged that any takeover offer should not meet with opposition from regulators.

Jarrell Gibbs, Texas' deputy chairman, revealed that the group had met with Professor Stephen Littlechild, the electricity regulator, on Monday to put the company's case. A three-way bid battle for Energy Group remains a possibility, after PacifiCorp of the US this week launched a raised £4.06bn bid for the company, which owns Eastern Electricity.

Mr Gibbs said there was no

reason why a Texas bid should be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. PacifiCorp was cleared by the MMC to bid for Energy Group last December. "We will satisfy any of the concerns the MMC expressed and maintain Eastern's credit rating," said Mr Gibbs.

Texas also hit back at claims

that the company's environmental record made an MMC referral more likely.

The company is thought to be

some way off making a formal

bidding

offer.

Talks have been continuing since last August, and are widely thought to have stalled.

TeleWest and Comcast co-operate in two cable franchises, Cable London and Birmingham Cable. TeleWest pointed out that it has the right to acquire Comcast's interests in those franchises if the company changes hands, and said it was considering its options. However, analysts said TeleWest's heavy debt load would prevent it from paying cash for the stakes.

– Peter Thal Larsen

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Talk of a Seagram strike sparks hectic trading for EMI and Allied

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

Is Seagram, the Canadian showbiz to spirits giant, building a war-chest for a takeover strike? For a time the stock market displayed intense excitement at the possibility of Seagram action, with its two likely victims, Allied Domecq and EMI, enjoying brief but hectic bouts of trading.

The sale by Seagram of a parcel of Time Warner shares was responsible for rekindling what has become one of the market's perennial takeover yarns.

With many convinced that Seagram must soon produce a takeover strike, the activities of the Canadian group and the ruling Bronfman family are closely monitored. So when Seagram raised more than \$1bn there was an immediate suspicion it was building up its cash reserves.

The creation of Diageo through the merger of Grand Metropolitan and Guinness

has put pressure on Allied to restructure its spirit side, which now looks vulnerable. A deal with Seagram - a merger or trading pact - must appear to be its most obvious route.

There is also the possibility that Seagram, with its own spirits business under similar pressure to Allied, could mount a full bid for the Beefeater gin to Teacher's whisky group.

More likely, however, is a shot at EMI. The Bronfmans have fallen in love with the glamour of the entertainment world and seem more keen to develop their showbiz empire than the humdrum spirits side. With EMI, after poor trading, looking exposed, many observers believe it will be the eventual Seagram target. Its shares, 647.75p in May, spun 6p higher to 472.5p after touching 480p. Allied closed 10p up at 563p after 570p.

Seagram also influenced

Diageo. Its warning that Asian revenue had plunged more than 50 per cent left Diageo off 15.5p to 550p.

Other blue chips had a volatile session. Footsie was at one time 79.3 points higher, after dipping into the red with an 18 decline in the final 30 minutes it managed to end with a 10.6 plus of 5,606.4.

Asda, with help from Dresdner Kleinwort Benson

stretched 5p higher to 206p. SBC Warburg pushed advertising agencies, with WPP 17p

It was a case of being better to journey than to arrive. Anticipating a no-change bank rate decision shares, particularly financials, turned on a robust display. By the time the bank rate decision was known they had already lost some of their lustre. New York's failure to cling to an early gain and then a late falls-off, thought to be instigated by Merrill Lynch, piled on the pressure.

Among the more violent swings was British Energy which moved between a 50p fall to a 12p gain before ending 14p off at 461p.

Financials had another rip-roaring day with excited talk of corporate action. Halifax jumped 35.5p to 938p and other former building societies made headway. Norwich Union improved 15p to 450p and GRE added 21p to 408p.

Asda with help from Dresdner Kleinwort Benson

stretched 5p higher to 206p. SBC Warburg pushed advertising agencies, with WPP 17p

at 97p. Stanford Rook, figures next week, rose 9p to 141.5p. There is vague talk of new drug developments. The shares soared to 635p last year before hopes of a TB treatment breakthrough were dashed.

Ansett Associates, a design group, held at 6.75p as its Spanish joint venture partner lifted its stake to 8.18 per cent, buying 750,000 shares at 6.5p.

Jumbo, the old Self Sealing Systems, jumped 11p to 35.5p. SSS's shares were quickly pricked, collapsing from a 54p placing to 17.5p. The company then merged with Jumbo in a cash and shares deal. Jumbo supplies hot air balloons for advertising promotions.

Hardy Oil & Gas jumped 37p to 285p after a "substantial" gas find in Pakistan; Cairn Energy and Tullow Oil were unchanged at 433.5p and 147p as the long silence over their Bangladesh developments continued.

Newcomer Athlone Extrusions, placed at 77.4p, ended 14p off at 66.4p. At 97p. Stanford Rook, figures next week, rose 9p to 141.5p. There is vague talk of new drug developments. The shares soared to 635p last year before hopes of a TB treatment breakthrough were dashed.

TAKING STOCK

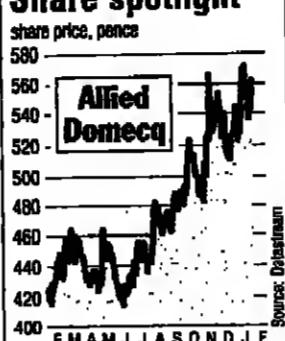
Dana Petroleum, one of the more actively traded operators in the former Soviet Union, is said to be on the verge of winning a production agreement for the Salym field, a large and highly promising development. Three other deals are under negotiation.

Graham Stewart of Dana said: "We are feeling pretty bullish." Dana shaded 0.25p to 22p. Assets, according to UBS, are worth 30p a share.

Grosvenor Inns, after its pub and boardroom shake-up, is on the right route and the shares, up 17p to 233.5p, are a buy, believes Credit Lyonnais Laing. It sees

MDIS, the computer services company renowned for a series of profit warnings, firmed 4p to 48.5p on the buzz that it is over the worst and its next set of results will be encouraging. In 1994 the shares were 239.25p.

Share spotlight



Source: Bloomberg

Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The Yield is the latest twelve months' declared gross dividend expressed as a percentage of the share price. The P/E ratio is the share price divided by the last year's earnings per share, excluding extraordinary items but including exceptional. Order details Ex Rights x Ex-Dividend; E=Ex-Suspended; P=Party Paid; np=No Paid; AMI=AMERICAN DEPOSITORY RECEIPT; Gilt Prices are Bloomberg Generic.

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(TIS plc, London SE1A 4PZ)

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Gilt Index 102.86 +0.07

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Prayers and big players as Olympic show hits Nagano

The XVIII Winter Olympics begin tomorrow with wall to wall television coverage guaranteeing huge armchair audiences around the world. Mike Rowbottom reports from Nagano, Japan, on the greatest show in the snow.

There is a new edifice in the grounds of Nagano's ancient Zenkoji Temple - the CBS Television Centre, complete with satellite dish and a huge, roving camera crane.

Pilgrims arriving to worship at the Buddhist shrine in recent days have found film crews from the American TV network attending their devotions. And, on occasions, requesting that those devotions be repeated in order to obtain a better shot.

It is a fitting image for the modern Olympics, where time honoured ideals have to co-exist with commercialism for the Games to be viable.

The last time the Winter Olympics came to Japan - when they were held at Sapporo in 1972 - the event generated \$8.5m (£5.3m) in broadcast rights. This time, the figure is \$513m and CBS's pride of place may not be unrelated to the fact that they are paying \$375m of that figure.

The 1994 winter Olympics in Lillehammer generated the fourth largest TV audience in US history. An estimated 120 million viewers tuned in to watch Nancy Kerrigan skate against a field who included Tonya Harding, whose husband had been implicated in an attack on Kerrigan before the Games.

The 18th winter Olympics hold similar television potential, even if their dramas will lack the vicious edge of the one that was played out in the Hamar Amphitheatre.

Once again, it is the women's figure skating which offers a compelling rivalry and once again the rivals are American - Tara Lipinski and Michelle Kwan.

Last year, at the age of 14, the tiny figure of Lipinski took the US and world titles away from her 17-year-old compatriot.

Lipinski's success has come as a result of developing the most technically demanding routine in the world, involving seven triple jumps. But in terms of artistry, she is not on the same rank as the graceful Kwan.

"About a second after they crowned her, the judges wanted to take it back," says American skating observer commented on Lipinski's World Championship victory.

Last month, Kwan regaled her US title with a sublime performance earning a maximum 6.0 for artistry in 15 out of the possible 18 marks. She is the media darling, while Lipinski, whose acrobatics appear to have been scrutinised more critically by the judges this season, has been put on the defensive.

Gooch speeds towards gold before swapping skates for pedals

One of the few chances Great Britain has of a gold medal lies with Nicky Gooch, the speed skater with a bent for bicycles.

Mike Rowbottom caught up with Guildford's blade runner as he warmed up for Nagano.

Nicky Gooch, Britain's leading speed skater, has long-term ambitions to compete at the summer Olympics in cycling. But for now, this 25-year-old from Guildford is seeking further medals on the ice to add to the Olympic 500 metres bronze he won four years ago.

To employ a little cycling terminology, however, returning to



Going downhill: Switzerland's Markus Hermann experiences the piste at Hakuba - venue for the Olympic alpine skiing disciplines - yesterday

Photograph: Reuters

The alpine skiing events are also likely to prove compulsive viewing at the end of the season which has been dominated by the arrival of Hermann Maier.

He has been at the forefront of Austria's domination in World Cup events and is the favourite here for at least three of the five alpine disciplines - the giant slalom, the super-giant slalom and the blue ribbon event of the downhill.

Perhaps wisely, Maier downplayed his prospects in the latter event after finishing third in practice, claiming the course was too flat to favour his high-risk style. Will a course succeed where every rival has so far failed this season? Another dramatic conflict begins to build.

Other innovations at these Olympics include the formal introduction of three new events - women's ice hockey, snowboarding, which is the fastest growing winter sport, and curling, which is one of the oldest.

The latter represents one of the three main medal opportunities for a lean, but keen British team of 35, the smallest in number since the 1960 Winter Games at Squaw Valley. The Scottish quartet who form the Great Britain team - James Dryburgh, Dougie Dryburgh, John Napier and Philip Wilson - recently finished third in the European Championships and then registered a victory over the German team who won that title.

While Canada are the favourites for the gold, Britain are among five teams who could fill the other medal places.

The four-man bobsleigh team driven by Corporal Sean Olson, 1st

Battalion, the Parachute Regiment, have a fighting chance of a medal after a highly competitive season in which they have finished fifth in the world rankings, earning two bronze medals in World Cup events.

The other prospect of British success involves the short-track speed skaters, who will be challenging for a medal in the 5,000 metres relay and are also in with a chance of taking an individual medal through Nicky Gooch, who won a bronze in the 500m at the last winter Olympics.

Steven Cousins, Britain's sole representative in the ice skating has prepared himself for an all or nothing effort in his third and, he maintains, last Olympics. Meanwhile, Graham Bell, in the alpine skiing,

and Michael Dixon, in the biathlon, are taking part in their fifth Games.

As the 3,000 athletes from 80 nations congregate in this sprawling industrial town, the big question is whether the road network can cope. Traffic up to the skiing venue at Hakuba was held up for nearly two hours when a medium bus collided with a car on the single lane road.

The police have asked the 36,486-strong population to keep their cars off the road at key times and anyone living within two miles of their work is expected to walk there. It remains to be seen whether these calls will be respected by residents who are, understandably, feeling a little grumpy.

All will start to be revealed this weekend.



Nicky Gooch: 'These will be my last Winter Games'

And then there was the disqualification in the 1,000m final, where he was adjudged to have brought down the Canadian Derrick Campbell while overtaking.

"I always seem to do well when I am up against it," said. "I don't know why. Maybe it's something to do with needing the adrenalin."

Saturday's timetable

(Times in GMT)

Opening ceremony: 0200

Ice Hockey: Italy v Kazakhstan 0700; Austria v Slovakia 0700; Germany v Japan 1100; France v Belgium 1100

TV Times

Tonight: BBC2: 1600-1845 Preview (repeated 0005-0030); BBC1: 0155-0400 opening ceremony, Eurosport: 23m-2am

Tomorrow: BBC2: Opening ceremony highlights 0125-1721; Eurosport: 2am-2am

Nagano to compete in the XVIIIth Winter Games is, for Gooch, equivalent to getting back on his bike after a serious fall.

Last year Gooch competed in this Japanese city at the World Championships. The result, in his own succinct assessment, was "nightmare". A broken skate in the 500m and a mysterious disqualification in the 500m effectively ruined the whole outing for Gooch. He can only hope that he has had all his bad luck here.

The whole feel of these Olympics is different for Gooch to the last one, as he reflected ruefully shortly before winning his fifth national title in December.

At the 1994 Winter Olympics in Lillehammer, almost all the British attention in his event was focused on the man who preceded him as na-

tional No 1, Wilf O'Reilly. The genial Brunnie was expected to add an official Olympic title to the two gold medals he had won in 1988 when speed skating was included in the Games as a demonstration sport.

By the end of those Games, however, O'Reilly's ambitions in both the 500 and 1,000m had been frustrated by damage to his skating blades, and Gooch came away with a bronze medal in the 500m, having recovered from the disappointment of being disqualified from silver medal position in the 1,000m for pushing.

Now he finds himself as one of the handful of identifiable British medal hopes at these Games, a situation which leaves him feeling ambivalent.

In speed skating terms, Gooch thinks of himself as a middle-distance athlete rather than a sprinter, an all-round rather than a specialist speedster. "Things would have to go very well for me to get a medal in the 500 metres," he said, "but I am skating closer to world record times."

And, indeed, he won the European title at the event last month despite having his preparations affected by an untimely bout of flu.

But it is the 1,000 metres which remains Gooch's big hope, the event where he finished third in the pre-Olympic qualifying, which probably gives the best guide to form in a notoriously volatile sport.

"I'm looking at the gold medal this time," said Gooch, who now believes he is at his peak in a sport where the South Korean world champion is 18. "For most skaters, it is a downward curve from here," he said. "This will be my last Winter Games."

SAILING

Silk Cut in collision

Silk Cut's unhappy Whitbread Round the World Race continued yesterday when she reported hitting a unidentified object five days out from Auckland on the fifth leg to Brazil.

The British boat, skippered by Lawrie Smith, damaged her bow, but was not taking on water.

The setback on the leg

● Due to a production error,

the wrong strapline, "Drugs in

sport", appeared in some edi-

tions above yesterday's report

of the Whitbread Round the

World race. We apologise for

this mistake.

Positions, Digest, page 27

It is not the forecast of big

winds that is worrying us on Merit Cup in the Whitbread Round the World race at the moment, but the prospect of a steady 20 to 30 knots to give fast running conditions as we turn left towards Cape Horn. If anything I am more fearful of 30-knot winds than 10m of 50.

With 30 knots we are right on the margin when carrying our big spinnakers and when you are on the margin you can suffer some pretty scary wipe-outs. In 50 knots the mainsail is well reefed down and there is very little else up.

On the plus side, these are

the conditions in which there

can be some big runs and af-

ter the relatively easy start the

whole fleet will want to get on

with the job of tackling this

southern ocean leg.

At least we can all feel a lit-

Toshiba came back. The strategy of striking hard south has been established and the opportunity for breaks nullified.

It has been tricky first five days. We were watching each other like hawks and you could be sure that if you made what looked like a decisive change in direction their two or three boats would immediately follow. And for some reason it has seemed to take longer than normal to get back into sleeping and eating patterns. Perhaps it was because we New Zealanders had such a busy time at home in Auckland.

If there is a niggle at all it has been seeing Lawrie Smith in Silk Cut showing better than expected speed in the light to moderate conditions which we were doing the right thing.

As it happens Chessie and

On the other hand Swedish Match has not enjoyed the conditions, but she has survived in them long enough to be in with the bunch as the new pattern emerges.

The distances between the top seven boats can be discounted, as they can be made up quickly in the conditions we should have for the remaining 5,700 miles. The only damage has been a bent stanchion and the crew are in good shape.

A New Zealand Air Force plane passed overhead just before we altered course to head more east. That is something we only expect when approaching home, a sort of welcome signal. This time it was to say goodbye and the next land we expect to see is the notorious Cape Horn at the tip of South America. That, too, will be a welcome sight.

Watching hawks poised to soar on high winds



GRANT DALTON

te relief that no one has stolen

a march during the tramp

south. The only worry was

seeing Chessie Racing and

Toshiba heading east. That

sort of thing makes a skipper

wonder about his own tactics.

However, we had Silk Cut

and Swedish Match with us, so

obviously some others thought

we were doing the right thing.

As it happens Chessie and

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Resort	Comment	Area open	Last snow cm	Low cm	Upp cm	Forecast
ANDORRA	Dry snow at all elevations	90%	3.2	60	80	Fair
AUSTRIA	Ice patches on lower slopes	95%	3.1	80	100	Sunshine
BULGARIA	Relatively good conditions	100%	1.2	60	100	Light cloud
CANADA	Powerful snow on all surfaces	100%	5.2	140	260	Sunny
FRANCE	Gold great at altitude	85%	2.1	80	240	Sunny
ITALY	Folgarida - Monte Vigo lifts open	100%	1.1	50	130	Cloudy, sun偶爾
ROMANIA	Fagaras - Poiana Brasov open	100%	2.2	50	90	Cloudy
SPAIN	Franco - Sierra Nevada - Panticosa open	95%	2.2	30	80	Cloudy
SWEDEN	Firm packed snow at all levels	100%	3.2	40	40	Blue skies
SWITZERLAND	Firm packed snow on route	95%	2.1	50	100	Fair
UNITED STATES						

27/SPORT

كذا من الأصل

FOOTBALL

Beckham's thoughts on fame game and Munich add spice to £3.5m boot deal

Dry ice, loud music, strobe lights - they launch West End shows with less fuss. All this for a boot sponsorship, but yesterday the player was David Beckham.

Guy Hodgson was there.

You could hear the approach of the full-scale personality and part-time footballer from half

a mile away. The deep, satisfying roar of a Porsche heralded David Beckham's arrival as surely as trumpets used to announce a monarch.

In the 1950s Bobby Charlton would walk into the city for a night out with the other Manchester United players, set apart from the man on the terraces only by their ability. Not now. Can you imagine Ryan Giggs in a bus queue, or Beckham knocking about in a beat-up Escort?

On the day before today's

40th anniversary of the Munich air crash, Beckham was on display to announce a seven-year deal with Adidas that will earn him £3.5m. At 22, in the space of six years he has gone from cleaning Bryan Robson's footwear to filling his boots by the simple expedient of being talented in them. Duncan Edwards thought he had made it when the club started supplying studs.

You read so many things about Beckham that when you hear him speak it is a surprise. "There's been a few articles in the papers that say I've got

quiet, embarrassed even, he was anything but flash. Soberly he addressed his image, his temper and Munich.

Even he is shocked at the rocket, post-Push Spice power, rise from the nervous debut against Leeds in April 1995 to becoming one of the most famous people in the country. "I didn't expect it to come so quickly," he said. "It's been hard to keep up with."

"There's been a few articles in the papers that say I've got

too big for my boots but people who know me say I'm just the same. Things have changed in my life but I haven't - too many people would knock me down if I did. The criticism hurts sometimes and I worry about the effect on my family."

Which would be fine except that Beckham has the habit of courting publicity as well as one of Britain's most desirable women. His celebration at Chelsea recently, hands behind ears directed at supporters who harrased him, was not designed to win friends and neither are the occasional on-field flashes of temper.

"There's a picture in a magazine of the abuse I was getting from the Chelsea fans when I was taking a corner there," he countered by reference to the provocation he faces each week.

"It doesn't bother me, but when I celebrate I don't think I've done anything wrong. I haven't stuck two fingers up or anything."

As for his short fuse he says

both his club manager, Alex Ferguson, and the England coach, Glenn Hoddle, have spoken to him and are satisfied he is handling things better. "I do it because I'm so hyped up for the game. I love football and I love winning and when things aren't going right I get annoyed. I can't help it," he said.

Perhaps Beckham would be more restrained if he did not play for the club he supported as a boy. He understands the split emotions this weekend as

United both commemorate and celebrate the lives of the eight players who died in Munich 40 years ago with a service of remembrance today and a minute's silence before tomorrow's match against Bolton.

"Saturday will be a great day and a sad day," Beckham, a member of the last generation of United players to meet Sir Matt Busby, said, "and hopefully we'll perform in the way the Busby Babes would have done, get the result in style."

Klinsmann to miss only three weeks

Jürgen Klinsmann, who broke his jaw during Tottenham's FA Cup fourth-round defeat at Barnsley on Wednesday night but will not need surgery, should return to Premiership in three weeks' time. The German captain spent the night in hospital after a collision with Arjan de Zeeuw, the Barnsley centre-back.

Crystal Palace have beaten off interest from Manchester United and will complete the £1m signing of Carlisle's 20-year-old striker, Matt Jansen, early next week, subject to a medical. The fee could double depending on appearances.

Leicester City have completed the signing of Greece's captain, Theo Zagarakis, from PAOK Salonika for £20,000. The striker Didi Adebola has completed the formalities of his £1m move from Crewe to their First Division rivals, Birmingham City. Nigel Jemson has also switched First Division clubs, the striker joining Bury next week for £100,000.

Nottingham Forest, pursuing promotion from the First Division, are considering scrapping their reserve team and replacing it with an under-21 side. They hope that team would play in a new FA Under-21 league while continuing to compete in the new Premier Youth League.

Manchester City yesterday transferred 15 players in a bid to cut their wage bill. The list includes Nigel Clough and Eddie McGoldrick but only one player signed by the manager, Frank Clark - Paul Beesley, bought from Leeds for £500,000 a year ago.

Walsall were yesterday anxiously awaiting news of their French striker, Roger Boli, after reports suggested he had walked out on the Second Division club, and was in France training with one of his former clubs, Lens.

Francis Jeffers, the 17-year-old Everton striker who has been hailed as the next Michael Owen, is signing a five-year contract at Goodison worth around £1m. Newcastle United had shown interest in him.

- Alan Nixon

NON-LEAGUE NOTEBOOK

Lymington hope their luck will hold after fourth-round drama

Of the 16 clubs left in the FA Carlsberg Vase, perhaps the luckiest to be involved in today's fifth-round draw are Lymington.

In last month's fourth round the Jewson Wexsex League title-chasers escaped from Essex still in the tournament thanks to a remarkable incident at Braintree Town. In extra time, with the score level at 0-0, the home side's Neil Grice shot home - but the ball went through the back of the net and, despite no admission from the Lymington goalkeeper, Wayne Shaw, that he had been beaten, the goal was disallowed.

Shaw became involved in arguments with Braintree supporters and was sent off for hurling the ball at a spectator. Lymington's 10 men hung on for a replay, which also ended in dramatic circumstances. The Essex side were leading 1-0 with 10 minutes to go when their goalkeeper, Paul Catley, was sent off for a foul.

Trevor Gunn, a defender, went in goal and saved Nigel Mottashed's penalty. He was beaten by another spot-kick from the same player two minutes later, however, after a hotly contested handball verdict from the referee. A second Braintree player, John Bishop, was then dismissed for retaliation.

THE INDEPENDENT

Henry Blofeld's**West Indies****Cricket****Commentary**

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RUGBY UNION: FIVE NATIONS' CHAMPIONSHIP



England players show dogged determination in getting rid of an intruder at training in Buc yesterday. Photograph: PA

Rodber and Dawson have to pull out

Tim Rodber and Matt Dawson, two of England's potential replacements for tomorrow's Five Nations' Championship confrontation with France, were forced to withdraw from the squad yesterday.

Chris Hewett reports on a bizarre outbreak of stresses and strains among the bit-part extras.

Clive Woodward described it as a "gentle, walk-through session", but by the time England's finely tuned band of rugby thoroughbreds returned to their Versailles base to be fed, watered and pampered in preparation for tomorrow's big game, two of them had cried off injured. God only knows what would have happened had the coach given his players a real work-out yesterday.

It wouldn't surprise me if the \$7m is accurate," a anonymous source close to the parties told the American news agency Associated Press. The source added: "He can't just walk away from a contract. Mike is just frustrated right now because he can't fight."

Tyson was widely reported to have assaulted King outside a Los Angeles hotel last weekend, but so far all King's public utterances about Tyson have been extremely conciliatory. "I love Mike Tyson and he knows it," King said in a statement earlier this week.

Tyson has earned an estimated \$140m in six fights since he was released from an Indiana prison in 1995 after serving time on rape charges. The New York Post claims that that Tyson is down to \$150,000 in liquid assets.

All three can be expected to fiercely contest Tyson's attempts to free himself from contractual relationships with them, and the matter could well result in a messy and protracted court action.

Dr Elias Ghanem, the chairman of the Nevada State Athletic Commission which will adjudicate on Tyson's application to have his licence re-

stricted, said it would be "very hard" for Tyson to break his contract with King, Horne and Holloway.

"I don't know if Tyson is thinking that since he is not licensed, that his contract is void," Ghanem said. "It would be very hard for someone to sign with someone else, knowing he already has a valid contract. The way I understand it, it would be hard for Tyson to sign with anyone else without Don King releasing him."

Ghanem's statement gave credence to the view that Tyson might jeopardise his chances of regaining his licence by ditching King. The outcome of any hearing about the licence "depends on Mike Tyson's behaviour and what he does inside and outside the ring," Ghanem said.

Ghanem said he was also concerned about reports that Tyson may owe as much as \$7m (£4.3m) in taxes. "Anytime somebody has a tax problem, usually the IRS would put a lien on his purse before he gets in the ring. That would be an issue. We don't like to get involved in that," Ghanem said.

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"I don't know if Tyson is thinking that since he is not licensed, that his contract is void," Ghanem said. "It would be very hard for someone to sign with someone else, knowing he already has a valid contract. The way I understand it, it would be hard for Tyson to sign with anyone else without Don King releasing him."

Ghanem's statement gave credence to the view that Tyson might jeopardise his chances of regaining his licence by ditching King. The outcome of any hearing about the licence "depends on Mike Tyson's behaviour and what he does inside and outside the ring," Ghanem said.

Ghanem said he was also concerned about reports that Tyson may owe as much as \$7m (£4.3m) in taxes. "Anytime somebody has a tax problem, usually the IRS would put a lien on his purse before he gets in the ring. That would be an issue. We don't like to get involved in that," Ghanem said.

"It wouldn't surprise me if the \$7m is accurate," a anonymous source close to the parties told the American news agency Associated Press. The source added: "He can't just walk away from a contract. Mike is just frustrated right now because he can't fight."

Tyson was widely reported to have assaulted King outside a Los Angeles hotel last weekend, but so far all King's public utterances about Tyson have been extremely conciliatory. "I love Mike Tyson and he knows it," King said in a statement earlier this week.

Tyson has earned an estimated \$140m in six fights since he was released from an Indiana prison in 1

CRICKET: SECOND TEST

Pacemen push England out of the comfort zone

Derek Pringle
reports from the Queen's Park Oval, Trinidad

England 130-6
v West Indies

Two major events happened here in Port of Spain yesterday. The Test series between England and the West Indies goes past the hour mark and Jack Russell finally got the chance to earn his 50th cap. However, the fact that Russell was out immediately after tea, meant that England, despite enjoying a solid start, were once again in deep trouble against the West Indies fast bowling machine.

When he won the toss at 9.35 am, Michael Atherton had no hesitation in batting first. With the pitch having been given an early morning shave it was probably the right decision by the England captain and one that, despite his side's early good fortune with the bat, looked to be vindicated when they lunched on 70 for 1.

But comfort zones are rela-

tive against the West Indies bowlers who tend to bulldoze rather than work their way through chinks in their opponents' armour. Once Alec Stewart had gone for a fortuitous 50, England lost three wickets for 37 runs in 14 overs, including the important one of Graham Thorpe, caught behind on the stroke of tea after cutting lazily at the off-spin of Carl Hooper.

With a traditional fast bowling base underpinning their game plan, West Indies sides have a reputation for putting their opponents in to bat and hitting them hard. It is a tried and tested plan and one Brian Lara would not have deviated from had he won the toss.

England on the other hand, tend to play things more by the book - the MCC coaching manual - preferring to put runs on the board, in the hope that deteriorating conditions will provide help to the bowlers later.

Only a game like cricket tends to throw up such contrasting philosophies and, although Atherton has had occasion to insert the opposition,

yesterday, despite the greenish pitch, was not one of them.

On balance, it was the right decision too. The bat may have been passed, but up until lunch, only the captain had been breached, a situation most England sides would have been happy with in the Caribbean on fairer pitches than this.

To be fair to the home side's bowlers, who were perhaps a touch short and wide of off stump for this surface, the pitch was not as lush and grassy as it was on the previous day. The ball still moved about, however, sometimes alarmingly so, and England's batsmen endured harrowing moments.

Switching ends away from the one where he had destroyed England four years ago, Courtney Walsh did what he claimed was most important to the West Indian cause and removed Atherton. It was a marvellous piece of fast bowling and having twice passed Atherton's outside edge in successive balls, the third managed to find its way to Lara at first slip.

With his bat slightly skewed, Atherton, no doubt expecting a bouncer, was slightly off balance. The fact that the response was not perhaps what he expected was a triumph for Ambrose's nous and patience over the more traditional fast bowler's instincts.

However, for those who believe there is a dearth of the quick but slightly raw Caribbean pacemen of old, the sight of Nixon McLean, ought to rekindle fond memories. Bowling from the Pavilion End, the 24-year-old McLean was a yard or so faster than his colleagues. He had countless moral victories against Stewart, whom he beat time and again, with pace and movement from his easy high action. On another day he will bowl worse and take wickets.

It was not the only good fortune Stewart enjoyed, and apart from surviving a fairly plum looking lbw appeal from Ambrose early on, the England opener was twice dropped in the slips, on 41 and 43.

When he was not busy impersonating a black cat, Stewart played his usual array of handsome strokes, particularly off the back foot, which he tends to favour rather too often even when he is set.

Indeed he had just reached his 50 with a neat clip to leg for two off Kenny Benjamin, when the next ball nipped back and pinned him in front of his stumps. Had he played forward, he would probably have survived.

With Nasser Hussain the new batsman at the crease and John Crawley bogged down, the bowlers slipped their leashes in a bid for further progress.

The bowler to get most life out of it in the opening session was Nixon McLean. He is appreciably quicker than either Courtney Walsh or Courtney Ambrose and has a lively and straight run-up which enables him to bowl from close to the stumps, such an advantage for the natural outswinger he is. The ball does not have to move far to beat the bat. We will hear plenty more of McLean.

On any good Test pitch there is usually a little surface moisture about in the opening overs and early on the batsman can expect a certain amount of sideways movement. As the sun works on it, however, the

moisture dries and the movement mostly disappears.

I first saw this pitch 30 years ago in 1967/68 when Colin Cowdrey's side won the series and the only difference in the appearance in the pitch then and now is that for the two Tests played here in that series, the grass, which was still thick, was rather more patchy.

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No team do this quite as well as the West Indies, who seem to be able to sense unease among the opposition. Although this was obvious in Crawley's case, when he became bemused after lunch, a nasty blow to Hussain's bottom hand, was conclusive evidence of the extra effort.

Returning to the Northern End, a lifter from Ambrose put Crawley out of his misery. Having defended well to begin with, the Lancashire man appeared to have given up on scoring runs altogether after lunch. Apart from a handsomely struck four through extra cover off Benjamin, scoring shots were few and far between, and his 17 came from 100 balls.

Thorpe then followed, much to the delight of the home supporters, who blew their conch shells and waved flags. When Adam Hollioake, run out in controversial circumstances after the keeper David Williams dislodged a bail with his gloves before the ball had arrived, they knew England's way back was a long and difficult road.



Mike Atherton jumps to avoid a ball from Courtney Walsh during England's first innings in the second Test in Port of Spain, Trinidad, yesterday

Photograph: David Ashdown

McLean exploits conditions

Port of Spain is full of cricket pitch experts from Jamaica, where they were all able to nod their heads knowingly and predict mayhem.

Their prognostications were just as confident here at Queen's Park Oval but this time most were well wide of the mark. Brian Lara, the West Indies captain, had said he would field first if he won the toss, which would have almost certainly have been true but it was also a solid piece of propaganda to start knees shaking in the England dressing-room.

Michael Atherton liked to bat first, and after the first three hours of play the England captain's decision was more than justified. The pitch is heavily and uniformly grassed, distinctly green in places.

I arrived at the ground early and was able to feel the grass before the ropes went round the pitch. The grass was alive but dry and it looked a good surface to bat on, provided the first session could be survived without too much damage. There was a certain amount of lateral movement but no great pace and, in general, nothing one would not expect English batsman to cope with.

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ACROSS

- 1 Played a little music and evoked memories? (6,15)
- 8 Beneficiary - she's upset, stifling anger (7)
- 9 Elaborate former currency (7)
- 11 Islands seen as waterlogged soil in black period (7)
- 12 Is very angry: "Look at most of the objects here" (7)
- 13 Youngster following to add drink to glass (3,2)
- 14 Official less likely, on reflection, to take in essential point (9)
- 16 Elaborate Order I confused with MBE (9)
- 19 Reversing is, in a taxi, quite straightforward (5)
- 21 Thrills unknown in European Community group one backed (7)
- 23 Bird in curruntly wanting head on lager (4-3)
- 24 Someone beating finally shattered glass (7)
- 25 Ointment base used on "All-In Wrestling" (7)
- 26 This instrument whines plenty badly (5-7)
- 1 Prison runs up something to restrain the foot (7)
- 2 Cut part of film joke? Supply with more material (2-5)
- 3 Had equal billing in cast order, possibly (2-7)
- 4 Helps when accepting wager (5)

DOWN

- 5 Helps as when turning unlucky (7)
- 6 Most of cosmetic on girl's comparatively abrasive (7)
- 7 Running out of beer is the limit? (3,6,3)
- 10 I'd taken up stiff position for Tube route (8,4)
- 15 US soldier bringing in a vulgar Italian leader... (9)
- 17 ...as a result of live issue (7)
- 18 Turk's excessive, taking on Arash state (7)
- 19 Nobleman dropping ring in part of North London (7)
- 20 Spy almost paid for misinformation (7)
- 22 Lumps turning up in animal fodder (5)

QUEEN'S PARK OVAL SCOREBOARD

England won toss

ENGLAND - First Innings

*M A Atherton c Lara b Ambrose11

J A Stewart lbw b Benjamin50

J P Crawley c & b Williams17

N Hussain not out22

G P Thorpe c Williams b Hooper....8

A J Hollioake run out2

H C Read c Williams b McLean.....10

E Wilson c & b Williams16

Total (for 6, 61.25 overs)126

Fell: 1-25, 2-37, 3-102, 4-114, 5-124, 6-128,

C Posse, P C R Tufnell, J W Headley, A C Rose, N Gaskins, D W Headley, A R

WEST INDIES - Second Innings

B L Campbell c Chanderpaul10

S L Narine c Lara b Hooper.....10

J C Adams, 10 D Williams, C E L

A Williams, 10 Nixon b McLean, K C G Benjamin, C A Walsh

Upharsin, 2 A Bucknor and S Vantabragh, haven't

TV replay umpire: C E Cumberbatch.

Match referee: S N Jarman.

First Test: 29 January-2 February (14 matches).

Second Test: 27 February-3 March (10 matches).

Third Test: 13-17 February (10 matches).

Fourth Test: 27 February-3 March (10 matches).

Fifth Test: 12-16 March (Barbados).

Sixth Test: 20-24 Mar (Antigua).

England A are planning to enter the second unofficial Test in Galle today with three spinners in an attempt to exploit Sri Lanka's dusty and dry pitches.

Shah has been overlooked, along with James Ormond, Chris Read and Andrew Flintoff, but he is sure to play in next week's finale to the three-match series in Moratuwa in line with England's policy to give every squad member at least one Test and a one-day international before the end of the tour.

Despite nearly two days of travelling - the pair returned to London with the rest of the World Cup squad before flying on to Colombo on Wednesday - England believe the Essex off-spinner Powell will be a valuable addition to